



THE MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL OF SCOTLAND

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Mr Jon Assheton
RWE Npower Renewables Ltd
North Range East Lodge
Stanley Mills
Stanley
Perthshire PH1 4QE

17.10.09

Dear Mr Assheton

Proposed Corrour Forest Hydro Scheme Ref: MHD/CB/L_UK1214607_05_SNH

I am writing to comment on the EIA Scoping Report for the above proposed hydro scheme. I shall also send these comments to the Scottish Government Consents Unit, as you request.

The Mountaineering Council of Scotland [MCofS] is generally supportive of sustainable renewable energy projects, especially small scale run of the river HEP schemes. This particular proposal does cause some concerns for us, although it should be possible to resolve these. We have concerns under Landscape and Visual Amenity, and Recreation and Access.

Landscape and Visual Amenity

The Scoping Report does not give full details of the transmission line between the Luiblea area and Ardverikie Lodge and we are concerned about the possible detrimental effect this might have on the visual amenity, unless appropriate mitigation measures are taken to minimise these. Obviously, a line of brown wooden poles, particularly alongside the forested Loch Laggan shoreline, would cause much less concern than a line of pylons would.

We appreciate some temporary loss of landscape and visual amenity will be inevitable until the work is complete and appropriate restoration has been done.

Recreation and Access

As you have indicated, the area is an important one for recreation, although I feel you underestimate the visitor levels involved. You mention 3 Munros, yet the summits of Beinn Eibhinn, Aonach Beag and Carn Dearg, to the south of the hills you list, are also accessed from the Luiblea area. Last time I was hillwalking in the vicinity of these hills I was surprised to see just how many people were using bikes to facilitate their approach. These hills are popular destinations year round. In addition, you do not mention the long standing and increasingly popular climbing venue, Binnein Shuas, west of Lochan na Hearba. In fact, when I went to climb there a couple of years ago, even in fairly indifferent weather, Ardverikie Wall, the local classic route, had three parties on it and there were several pairs of climbers queuing to climb it after them! Climbing here is a summer activity only.

During the construction phase, it would be necessary to maintain access for recreation, to comply with the Land Reform [Scotland] Act 2003. There would ideally be an access management plan to provide an alternative approach route which would operate until construction and commissioning were complete. The MCoS would be very happy to discuss this with the developer and if necessary to attend a site visit.

Additionally, also on the access front, parking on the A86 is limited and we should not want to see this reduced by plant works or storage. I imagine however, these activities should be confined to a location further south and away from the roadside.

The MCoS would be happy to engage with the developers on any of these matters and to assist with information on estimates of visitor numbers and impacts.

Yours sincerely

Beryl Leatherland
Access and Conservation

cc Catherine Banks, Consultant, Environ
cc Ms Joyce Melrose, SG Consents Unit