



THE MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL OF SCOTLAND

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20/10/09

Joyce.melrose@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Dear Ms. Melrose

Section 36 Application for the proposed Sloy Pumping Station Extension

Please accept these comments from the Mountaineering Council of Scotland (MCofS) on the Loch Sloy scheme extension. We are recognised by the Scottish Government as the Representative Body for hill walkers, climbers and ski tourers. We have over 10,000 members and aim to represent the interests of all the 400,000 regular Scottish mountaineers on issues relevant to access to, and conservation of, Scotland's mountaineering environment.

Recreation

The MCofS is seriously concerned regarding the lack of explicitly addressing the implications for the car parking space availability. Due to the lack of any options other than the Visitor Centre car park, many walkers use this as the set-off point primarily for Ben Vane and Ben Vorlich, and many probably avail themselves of the cafe, bringing in economic benefit. The estimate of peak staff numbers suggest that there would be significant impact on availability of parking for recreational access users. As it is stated that most staff will access with cars from the south, we suggest there should be a requirement at peak times of staff deployment and recreation that the contractors provide a fleet of minibuses to transport staff to the site from a suitable pick up point to the south so that walkers will not be prevented from enjoying access due to lack of car park space for any user group.

Aquatic Ecology

The MCofS has serious concerns over the threats to Powan. This is a species already threatened and the population of Loch Sloy should not be threatened. Following the precautionary principle, the MCofS would object to actions such as pumping without scientific assurances and insurance (another population established elsewhere) before the development is permitted to go ahead.

Landscape Character & Visual Impact

The MCofS welcomes the immediately close association of the extension with the existing development, and therefore accepts the assessment of little long-term negative landscape and visual impacts.

Please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss these issues further.

Yours sincerely

Hebe Carus
Access & Conservation Officer