



Co.Offaly
Eire

Dear Mr.Grant

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to make a submission re the above. As you can see from my address, I am a resident of County Offaly, one of the 5 Midland Counties of Ireland to be chosen by the Governments of your country and mine for the export of wind energy to Great Britain. The other counties are Kildare, Meath, Westmeath and Laois. I am vehemently opposed to this project and I will proceed to tell you why.

Firstly, the total area of the 5 counties above is a mere 3700 sq miles. Yorkshire alone measures 4700 sq miles. Into the 5 Midland counties will be crammed approximately 2000 giant turbines, each of minimum height 500 ft. The reason for the extreme height, the wind industry tell us, is that wind speeds in the Midlands of Ireland are extremely low because the Midlands are flat. Average wind speeds are only 4m/sec.

The 3 companies planning these leviathans for our countryside are firstly Element Power who plan to build 750 turbines of height 185 metres/600 ft across the Midlands. Element Power is an international company who build solar installations and wind farms. They are owned by a US private equity company Hudson Clean Energy, a conglomeration of bankers from Goldman Sachs, Merrill Lynch, Credit Suisse as well as several Chinese plutocrats.

Element Power plan to build a wind farm about 3km from where I live.

How do we know that? Well it just so happened that I spotted a map on Facebook showing the areas being targeted by Element and one of them is the area East of Banagher. I had the delightful task of calling to people's homes and telling them that 600 ft wind turbines were coming to a field near them. So now we are in the process of fund-raising to hire planning consultants and defend ourselves against these carpet-baggers which I am afraid is how I regard all wind energy companies having read extensively about them for the last year or so.

The 2nd company planning wind turbines for the Midlands is Mainstream Renewable Power owned by our own home-grown entrepreneur Eddie O'Connor. Eddie plans some 450 giant onshore turbines and several hundred off-shore.

The 3rd company involved is Bord na Mona, a semi-state company which looks after the peat bogs. They have announced a Clean Energy Hub in the East Midlands consisting of 650 behemoths which will export wind energy to the UK.

So all across the Irish Midlands right now there are communities living in terror of finding themselves in close proximity to a 600 ft wind turbine. But their spirit is strong and communities are uniting and fund-raising as best they can to hire the expertise necessary to defend themselves against the might of the wind industry which creates nothing but grief wherever it goes and creates very little energy because that is the real scam of the wind industry. At low wind speeds they generate no energy. At high wind speeds they have to be turned off. Wind is fickle and intermittent but the industry is so heavily subsidised by the consumer that the wind companies make vast fortunes even when their turbines are turned off.

However ,at a local level we scored an important victory against the wind industry recently. An Irish company called Galetech received planning permission from Offaly County Council last July for a wind farm consisting of 10 turbines of height 550 ft to be built near the village of Cloghan approx. 4 miles from where I live.This would be for the National Grid. A group of us decided to appeal the decision and in the last few weeks we received the good news that our Appeal was successful. The Inspector from our Planning Appeals Board, known in Irish as An Bord Pleanala, gave several reasons for endorsing our Appeal;

The turbines were too obtrusive and dominant in the landscape.
Residents nearby would suffer excess noise and shadow-flicker.
Loss of visual and residential amenity to the population of the area.
Negative impact on tourism in the area.
Threat to bird-life in the area.

This result has greatly heartened us and given us the resolve to fight this export project which will devastate the Irish Midlands if it goes ahead.
I sympathise with the UK if it is unable to meet its EU target of renewable energy by 2020 but that is your problem. Don't please exploit our countryside to meet your requirements in renewable energy. Britain, like Ireland is also an island with an extensive coastline giving it plenty of scope for developing offshore wind in particular.

Lastly, there is one other reason why this project should not go ahead. The Irish people were never told about it! Yes, there was a brief report in the papers last January when Pat Rabbitte and Ed Davey signed an Agreed Memorandum of Understanding but there was no formal announcement from our Government, no public notices etc. Indeed , I come across people frequently who are only now finding out about it.

Ireland will not be Great Britain's offshore wind farm.

Thank You

