

To whom it may concern,

I am a 16 year old girl living in Shetland and I am very concerned about the impact that the Viking Wind Farms will have on our environment. There are very unique landscapes here that must be preserved, and that will certainly be lost if this project was to go ahead. My family owns a single 6 kilowatt wind turbine, so I am all for renewable energy, but I feel that the financial and environmental cost of this project is too high for such a small and unique island.

My first concern is the peat banks that many of the turbines are to be built on. These unique landscapes are not found in many other places and are rich in all kinds of wildlife. Digging up the peat to make roads and bases for the turbines will release mass amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and will fatally disrupt the habits of hundreds of animals. These special habitats will likely never recover from that kind of damage, even with restoration projects. Restoration projects will not address the already released carbon dioxide.

My second concern is the efficiency of the turbines themselves. Our wind turbine can run in all weather conditions, maximising the amount of wind we can utilize, but the huge wind turbines proposed for this project will have to be braked when there are very high winds, which are very common in Shetland. This concerns me as they may be standing still for long periods of time which will not benefit anyone, wasting money on maintenance if they cease up in the cold or if they were to be damaged in winter storms.

My third concern is the interconnecting cable that is to be laid beneath the seabed between Shetland and mainland Scotland. This cable will be incredibly expensive to lay and the work could be very dangerous. The North Sea is known for often being very rough which could mean that work has to be paused frequently for bad weather, making it very inefficient. There would also be a lot of damage to the seabed itself where many marine animals and microorganisms live. These habitats would be completely destroyed by the cable itself and the work needed to lay it and then maintain it. The seabed would be continually disturbed for years which could mean that these environments will either recover very slowly or never recover at all. Furthermore, the cable will be transferring all the power generated to the Mainland; none of it will actually be used in Shetland. Communities in Shetland will not benefit in any way from the green energy generated by the project, and energy will be undoubtedly lost as it travels through the cable.

In conclusion, I hope you will seriously reconsider this project, as it could have devastating effects on the unique Shetland environment and its inhabitants. There are other forms of renewable energy that would be just as efficient if not more so in Shetland, like tidal or water turbines. Many places in Shetland have very strong tides and we get a lot of rain that drains from the hills in the many burns that run into the sea. The community benefits are not great enough to warrant the destruction of our rare peatlands and the wildlife that depends on them.

Regards,