

From: Fiona Hartigan [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday 28 March 2022 16:55
To: Development Plan
Subject: Clare County Council Development Plan Submission

27th March 2022.

Dear Sir / Madam.

We would like to make a submission for your consideration on your County Development Plan.

Our submission is in relation to your wind farm strategy for County Clare and in particular the designation of Meelick / Ardnacrusha and surrounding areas as "strategic " for future windfarms as highlighted on your wind farm locations map in your development plan.

We did send you previous submission dated 15/11/2020 , with a list of questions but no further communication was received back from Clare County Council with any answers so these questions still remain open.

One of the main questions from that last submission was for Clare County Council to share the criteria used to designate this area as strategic for wind farms.

This was a decision taken by Clare County Council without consultation or dialogue with the people that will be the most adversely affected by any potential wind farm developments like the one currently being proposed by Ballycar Green Energy Project. However , it appears that dialogue has been ongoing between Ballycar Green Energy/landowners and Clare County Council for some time as was advised at a recent meeting by your own planning personnel.

This area is not appropriate for the proposed Ballycar Green Energy project or any other on shore wind farm, this is a densely populated area, the proximity to people, families, young children, the elderly living out their twilight years makes this area totally inappropriate for any such development, did you take all this into consideration when assigning this area as a so called "strategic "area.

IT is not appropriate due to the health issues that we will suffer if wind turbines are allowed be built in this densely populated area.

What about the wildlife, natural habitats and breeding grounds for various species , some of them protected species that are going to be destroyed if any wind farm development is allowed to proceed.

The on-shore wind farm proposed by Ballycar Green Energy is a project driven by greed and money, where a select few gain at the expense of the mental and physical health of many, making our homes valueless and the destruction of wildlife in our area.

I would also like to question the rates that Clare County council stand to gain from this proposed Ballycar Energy project, have those been made known and how can the Council be open and transparent with this planning process when they themselves stand to gain substantially financially by allowing this project to proceed.

In my previous submission, I asked Clare County Council had you completed an analysis of off shore versus on shore wind capacity as part of your decision making in designating the Meelick / Ardnacrusha area as a so called "strategic" area.

I note with great interest a publication and comments made by Eamon Ryan TD, speaking in Dun Laoghaire port March 21st 2022, where he announced a new initiative to help develop off shore wind energy around Ireland's coasts which he quoted will be like " Ardnacrusha to the power of 100".

The construction of Ardnacrusha hydroelectric power station in the 1920's became one of the seminal moments in Ireland's history, providing a backbone for industrial, social and economic development for decades.

So, now it is time for Clare County Council to be brave, stand up and do what you know is the right thing and stop imposing ugly, disgusting, massive, towering wind turbines on people and their families and destroying our beautiful countryside. You are encouraging division of local communities with projects such as Ballycar/Ardnacrusha Wind Energy, where so called community funds which basically are attempts to bribe people into silence are offered to community groups in return for their support, while others in the community suffer the most enormous negative impact from these turbines.

Instead, you should stand up and create your own history by being the leader of off shore wind energy in Ireland. Eamon Ryan quoted last week:

“Where we could take for example the likes of Shannon Foynes , put in a building of these new turbine industry that would create thousands of jobs and real economic strength for the west of Ireland”

Why would you not want that for Clare, why would you not explore these options as a matter of priority and put all on shore wind farms on hold until these opportunities with so many benefits and gain are explored.

Why not target Moneypoint to become a large floating windfarm and transform it into a Green Energy hub.

The benefits of these off shore wind farms are huge:

Off shore wind is stronger, more powerful, more consistent than on shore wind and hence generates more energy more efficiently.

Until recently the technology needed was expensive, in a recent report it was stated that the cost of generating electricity off shore has reduced by 66% this is due to the following reasons:

- Larger Turbines possible at sea
- Technological Advances, i.e., the development of Lithium- Ion batteries, an essential element that guarantees continuity of supply from weather dependent sourcing .

Off shore wind farms can achieve so much more than on shore wind farms:

- Help achieve our emissions target reductions
- Shield us against spikes in energy prices on the international markets
- Create much needed employment opportunities around coastal regions

Our neighbors the UK has approx. 35% of the global installed off shore wind capacity, it is home to 7 of the worlds 10 biggest off shore wind sites.

The Hornsea One project, inaugurated last year just off England's Yorkshire coast, is the world's largest operational wind farm. With 174 off shore wind turbines, the electricity produced is enough to power over a million homes with clean energy.

The 2016 Census showed approx. 43,000 homes in Clare, that is not a lot of off shore wind turbines to allow you have the electricity to power all your homes with Green energy, why not take on that challenge.

Even the Netherlands that has a maritime area 15 times smaller than Ireland, has announced the development of additional off shore wind capacity of 11GW by 2030 , doubling its previous target.

This shows the potential of what can be done and achieved with a little different thinking and for those who are willing to stand up and make a difference in the right way.

Last week Eamonn Ryan stated:

“Every country is doing it, the UK is ahead of us,

We have the resource, there's a limit to onshore, with Off shore we have scale.

This project to develop off shore wind, to tap into what we have, it's probably one of the windiest locations in the world, he added, it's a huge opportunity and it starts today”

So, Clare County Councillors, take this huge opportunity and start today by saying No to any more on shore wind farms and be the leader in off shore wind energy, thus allowing the emissions targets to be met but allowing people to live in peace and harmony in those areas they call home, allow them to continue to enjoy the many species of wildlife and natural beauty in their areas, allow them to leave their legacies to their children and do not destroy our beautiful Clare hills in Meelick / Ardnacrusa area with multiple 185metre high turbines.

It is obvious that renewable energy is required going forward , we are not in any way anti renewable energy as I think we have put forward some real alternative suggestions here , but we strongly feel that with the new legislation passed in December 2021 regarding off shore wind farms , the reduction in the costs of off shore wind farms that are placed on the sea bed and the fact that floating wind turbines are now economically viable , there is huge scale of opportunity here , not just for Clare but for Ireland as a whole and it would be very remiss of Clare county council to continue along the road of on shore wind farms without evaluating completely and fully the vast potential being offered by off shore wind sites,

I hope you take all our submissions and suggestions into account and we look forward to hearing back from you with an update.

Thank you

Kind Regards;
Pat and Fiona Hartigan.