



Offshore Wind Farm in the Hebrides

There is mounting fury across Scotland over a parliament backed proposal to erect 91 wind turbines 340 metres tall (the biggest in Europe; the Eiffel Tower is a mere 324 metres tall) very close to the sacred islands of Iona, Staffa and Mull. The turbines will be the biggest in Europe. Whilst the area of the footprint of the scheme will be around half the size of the island of Mull.

In response to almost universal complaints from most of the islanders about the project, which will make tens of millions for the developers, the developers, Scottish Power has offered to fund some charity projects for the islanders to a maximum cost of £500 per project.

Anger from tourist operators include comments from Peter Macmillan, the owner of Scotland's biggest privately owned hostel chain MacBackpackers, who owns eleven hostels which provide over a quarter of a million bed nights a year. They also owns three buses that take his customers to the hostels.

Macmillans other concern is a parallel hydro project on Loch Ness, where he owns a small hostel. Where as part of a new proposal to build a new hydro site on the edge of Loch Ness some have expressed concerns that this might bring temporary changes in the water level which might influence the ecology. and reduce the world wide reputation of the loch as a tourist attraction. Telling us, "Net Zero is to be commended but it is important to place these kind of projects in the right places. Both Iona and Loch Ness have international reputations around the world as iconic places and to turn them into industrial sites seems utterly mad."

Others lodging complaints include commercial yacht skippers including Glen Murray who ran charter boats in the area for over thirty years and who has delivered yachts across the Atlantic on over seventeen occasions; " This is utter madness. The area which is to be covered with turbines might reasonably be described as some of the most beautiful sailing waters in the world, and that is to say nothing of the spiritual significance of Iona, which

the advertising guru David Ogilvie once described (to this writer) as being a religious brand of international significance for Scotland.

On Mull a major local historian Anne Baxter of Bunessan observed “ I am a supporter of wind farms in principle and initially backed this idea but when I saw the massive scale I changed my mind.”

Supporters of the development of both schemes claim that with the rapid advance of both global warming and the need for more energy for artificial intelligence, schemes such as this have to be given planning permission, leading to Glen Murray observing: “ Yes indeed, but a giant windfarm with 91 turbines bigger than the Eiffel Tower (each with flashing red lights all night), off the sacred Isle of Iona? That’s crazy!”

To understand the area and scale of the proposal, there is a website available at:-

<https://www.nomachairwindfarm.com/>

If you wish to object the closing date is the 15th August

Scottish Power has also developed a website for information which is available at:-

www.scottishpowerrenewables.com/offshore/machairwind