



## **Statement of qualified support for application ECU00003468 by Coriolis Energy for 10 wind turbines sited near Merkins on the Kilpatrick Hills**

The Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs is a long established charity which works in and around the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park to provide for the protection and promotion of the valuable special qualities of the area.

As a conservation body we are also acutely concerned about the damaging impacts of global warming. We therefore have an agreed stance in favour of renewable energy projects where we judge such developments will cause no or minimal material damage to the special qualities of the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park and its surrounding area.

Although this windfarm will be seen from many locations within and around the National Park, we do not consider it will cause substantial objective material damage to the natural environment or the experience people have of those areas.

We accept that a few people may be temporarily upset by seeing the turbines, but do not think that is sufficient grounds to withhold permission for their installation. We give the following 7 reasons in support of this position:

1. It is now well understood that there is nothing more important than rapidly reducing damaging carbon dioxide atmospheric emissions if we are serious about tackling the interconnected crises affecting energy, climate and nature. This defines the current period and influences every facet of the national park whose valuable special qualities the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs was set up to protect and promote.
2. As land-based wind power and energy storage systems are the cheapest and most readily available technologies for



rapidly decarbonising the atmosphere and improving the country's energy security, they should be given every encouragement.

3. There are no obvious rational objective reasons why renewable energy generation, transmission and storage facilities should not be sited in appropriate locations around and perhaps in some circumstances, in carefully selected sites, within the National Park.
4. Everyone has an individual responsibility to help in the process of tackling climate change.
5. Due to its upland glaciated topography, high rainfall and proximity to Scotland's major centres of population, the National Park area possesses a unique combination of advantages for renewable energy production, storage and distribution. These kinds of activities are already significant and well accepted land users within and around the park without causing undue environmental damage.
6. The proposed site for the windfarm on bleak moorland immediately east of the Auchencarroch land fill site is currently seldom visited as it has poor access. Its elevation does afford it excellent views north into the Loch Lomond basin, but the turbines would not interfere unduly with that. In all probability, as has happened at Whitelees and a number of other wind power sites near centres of population, the improved access would lead to an increase in recreational use of the moorland on account of these excellent views. The site's elevation, isolation and proximity to large population centres and National Grid conductors of course make it a highly suitable wind turbine site.
7. Like many animal species, human beings are instinctively territorial and it is well understood that this is often what can lie behind the strong feelings of unease some people may experience when changes are made by others to familiar surroundings. People are also very adaptable and



quickly get used to new features. Thus an initial outcry against new developments is usually followed quite quickly by acceptance. These understandable aspects of human behaviour and psychology are not sufficient reason for the rejection of essential new facilities. The Sloy hydro electric scheme, whose pylons, dam, penstock pipes and turbine hall made such a dramatic impact on the landscape, was roundly criticised at the time of its building 70 or so years ago. The pipes and turbine hall now enjoy Category A listing.

In addition, we believe that businesses which benefit from the valuable scenic and cultural qualities of National Parks have a duty to contribute towards the preservation of those special qualities. Similarly, we think that energy production, distribution and storage businesses which make use of open elevated sites and other land in around the park should do likewise. We therefore believe that planning permission for such developments should be conditional on a substantial proportion of any “Community Benefit” funds which may arise from such developments being applied to help provide for the preservation, promotion and appreciation of the special qualities of the Parks and their surrounding areas, thereby benefiting nature, visitors, communities and businesses.

We would also draw attention to the following:

1. **Impact of windfarms and tourism and public perception** <https://biggareconomics.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/BiGGAR-Economics-Wind-Farms-and-Tourism-2021.pdf> In terms of tourism in the Loch Lomond area, this well respected report notes that, “Analysis of 44 wind farm case studies in Scotland finds no evidence of a link between wind farm development and trends in tourism employment.”
2. **NPF4** – the new planning framework is much more supportive of windfarm deployment as part of a need for electrification of our energy and transport system. Policy 11 notes that, “Development proposals for all forms of renewable, low-carbon and zero emissions technologies will be supported.”

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