Tony Musiol

March 9th, 2021

To:

The Planning Department,

Kilkenny County Council,

County Hall,

John Street,

Kilkenny,

Co. Kilkenny R95 A39T.

**Subject: Submission to Draft Kilkenny City and County Development Plan**

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Draft Kilkenny City and County Development Plan. Thank you also for the information Zoom held several weeks ago which I found very useful.

I am submitting these comments as a private concerned citizen. In doing so, I want to recognise the information provided by Lingaun Valley Tourism of which I am a Board member.

I am extremely concerned at the proposed changes to the wind energy strategy in the Draft City and County Development Plan in the south west Kilkenny area adjoining the south east of county Tipperary.

This is an area renowned for its historic sites from our recent history and dating back 6,000 years. These historic and cultural gems are dispersed throughout the area creating a rich tapestry set in terrific scenery.

To those of us living in the area on both sides of the valley there is a natural enclosure which we feel should be protected. The Plan seems to permit turbines on a narrow strip between Kilamery and Windgap, extending on the hills down to Owning and beyond, Such installations will destroy the existing pastoral landscape which is an essential part of the attractiveness of the Lingaun Valley. It also significantly increases the probability that Tipperary Co Council will permit wind turbines on the hills like Carraigadoon above Faugheen. In the event of that outcome, I see little point in promoting the Lingaun Valley for tourism: large wind turbines in most sight lines will destroy the attractive natural heritage for visitors.

Historical, cultural and environmental interconnectivity between counties Kilkenny and Tipperary include:

* Slievenamon Mountain which dominates the valley and the circle of hills which form a natural enclosure of the area.
* The Lingaun River which rises on the slopes of Slievenamon and flows through the valley the bounding line between parishes, counties, provinces and Dioceses.
* The Knockroe Passage Tomb (5,200 BC) which has a winter solstice sunrise alignment on the hills in county Kilkenny and a sunset alignment on the Tipperary hills.
* The Kilmacoliver Passage Tomb (5,000 BC) which is aligned across the valley with the Cairn on the summit of Slievenamon.
* An abundance of Fulach Fia, Standing Stones and Dolmens.
* The Western Ossory High Cross’s (8th century) which span the Lingaun River. The predominant views from The Ahenny high cross’s are across the county border to the Kilkenny hills. The Killamery and Kilkieran high cross’s are on the Kilkenny side of the border.
* Carraigmoclear Hill (Tipperary) where a group of United Irishmen were ambushed by Crown forces in 1798, the slain rebels are interred in the nearby Killamery churchyard in county Kilkenny.
* The historic Ormonde and Victoria Slate Quarries (19th/20th century) located on both banks of the Lingaun River.
* A strong equine industry with prominent horse breeding and training facilities located in the valley in both counties.
* The Lingaun Valley Tourism Group whose members are drawn from both counties and who work to promote and protect the heritage sites of the area and develop it’s tourism potential.

Other sites of intrest in the area include the (Michael Hogan and Tom Kiely memorials in Grangemockler and Ballyneale, Kilcash Castle in Tipperary) and the Windgap Grotto and Lamogue Ogham stones in Kilkenny).

This natural enclosure is created by Slievenamon and its foothills to the north to Nine Mile House and to the south over Faugheen is mirrored in Kilkenny as the hills complete a circle from Nine Mile House via Windgap, Brown Mountain, Owning and Baunfree.

These hills are currently zoned unsuitable for turbines in both counties and this must continue to be the case: furthermore the area enclosed inside these hills should also be protected.

Living by choice in a quiet rural area I am dismayed that anyone would consider allowing these giant turbines in such a beautiful and historic area.

The impacts of these giant wind turbines are well documented:

Visually destructive to the landscape and will forever change the tranquil pastoral nature of the valley.

Those living close to the turbines may find them noisy and obtrusive with shadow flicker.

The equine industry is concerned about the impact of shadow flicker on horse welfare.

 Detract from the area as an attractive place to live with a consequent reduction in property values.

Greatly reduce the tourism potential of the area and in particular the unique, unspoilt landscape described in the text above.

Considerable effort has been expended in recent years by Tipperary and Kilkenny Co Councils, Leader Companies and Tourism Companies with significant intercounty community collaboration to develop the tourism potential of the Lingaun Valley.

I believe that the Kilkenny hills overlooking Killamery, Windgap, Lamogue, Kilmoganny, Hugginstown, Templeorum, Owning and Tullahought and the area enclosed by these hills and the Tipperary border should be zoned as being unsuitable for wind turbines.

Yours Faithfully,

Tony Musiol