



# Formal objection to the Revised Beinn Mhòr Power Windfarm

John Muir Trust response to the Revised Beinn Mhòr Power Windfarm Application, Eisgein, Lewis

fao. Mr. Paul Smith  
The Scottish Executive,  
Consents and Emergency Planning Unit,  
2nd Floor,  
Meridian Court,  
5 Cadogan Street,  
Glasgow  
G2 6AT

11th May 2006

Dear Mr. Smith,

The John Muir Trust (JMT) wishes to lodge a **formal objection** to the revised planning application by Beinn Mhor Power to develop a 53 turbine wind farm at Eisgein on the Isle of Lewis. The John Muir Trust wishes to maintain its opposition to this scheme, as set out in its [letter of 5th May 2005](#), objecting to Beinn Mhor Power's original application.

The John Muir Trust believes that this scheme should be refused. If the Scottish Executive does not wish to refuse the proposal, we would ask that a Local Public Inquiry be held to examine the issues that it raises in more detail.

**In addition to its original objection, the Trust would like to make the following points:**

1. Despite being reduced in size to 53 turbines, it is our view that a development of this scale, with its associated roads and transmission infrastructure, will still have a serious and damaging detrimental impact on this outstanding area of wild land. The proposals will adversely affect an area of great scenic value, including part of the South Lewis, Harris and North Uist National Scenic Area (NSA).
2. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's own Planning Department recommended that the Comhairle object to the original scheme, primarily because the damage to the

landscape and the NSA outweighed any potential socio-economic advantages. The John Muir Trust believes that the current proposal would still have an unacceptable impact on the NSA, whilst the proposed reduction in the number of turbines greatly weakens the case for its social and economic advantages.

3. NPPG 14, para 25 states: "The presence of a national natural heritage designation is an important material planning consideration. This does not mean that development is precluded by the presence of such a designation. Proposals require to be assessed for their effects on the interests which the designation is designed to protect. Development which would affect a designated area of national importance should only be permitted where:

**the objectives of designation and the overall integrity of the area will not be compromised;**

or

**any significant adverse effects on the qualities for which the area has been designated are clearly outweighed by social or economic benefits of national importance."**

It is the John Muir Trust's view that, whilst the revised proposal will still adversely affect the objectives and integrity of the NSA, the reduction in the proposed number of turbines **completely undermines** any claim that the resulting social and economic benefits will be of over-riding national importance.

4. NPPG 14, para 16 states: "**The most sensitive landscapes may have little or no capacity to accept new development** (JMT highlight). Some of Scotland's remoter mountain and coastal areas possess an elemental quality from which many people derive psychological and spiritual benefits. Such areas are very sensitive to any form of development or intrusive human activity and planning authorities should take great care to safeguard their wild land character. This care should extend to the assessment of proposals for development outwith these areas which might adversely affect their wild land character."

The John Muir Trust believes that this is an excellent description of the area covered by the proposal, and that this sensitive and nationally important area of wild land would be irreversibly damaged if the Beinn Mhor Power proposals went ahead.

5. Following discussions with RSPB, The John Muir Trust is concerned that the Environmental Statement seriously underestimates the collision risk for the area's nationally important populations of Golden Eagles and White Tailed Sea Eagles, due to problems with the assumptions it uses when interpreting data. We understand that RSPB have contacted you providing detailed information about this, and JMT supports their concerns.

The John Muir Trust urges the Scottish Executive to refuse this application.

Yours sincerely

**Mick Blunt**  
**JMT Partnerships Manager**