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Corrieyairack Beauly – Denny track retention, Culachy Estate. THC Ref 15/03378/FUL

The John Muir Trust wishes to object to the Application by Culachy Estate Management Ltd to retain a section of the existing temporary access track and two bridges constructed by SSE to enable the development of the Beauly – Denny overhead transmission line (BDOL).

The John Muir Trust is the leading wild land conservation charity in the United Kingdom. Working with people and communities to conserve, campaign and inspire, the Trust is a membership organisation that seeks to ensure that wild land is protected and enhanced and that wild places are valued by and for everyone.

Scotland's wild land is an asset of national and international significance but it is a finite resource. Wild land plays a vital role for carbon storage in trees and peatland, gives us clean air, water and food and is home to valuable wildlife. Wild land also plays a vital role in supporting tourism and a wide range of other economic and leisure activities.

The Trust has considered the application against its :

- Wild Land Policy 2010
- Built Development Policy 2013
- Energy and Wild Land Policy 2013

and

- National Planning Framework (3) 2014
- Scottish Planning Policy (2) – 2014
- Scottish Natural Heritage Wild Land Areas Map – 2014

1. We are seriously concerned that this application has been submitted and is being considered following assurances given at the Public Inquiry by SSE that these tracks would be fully reinstated once the BDOL was completed.
2. The Third National Planning Framework 4.4 states *“Scotland’s landscapes are spectacular, contributing to our quality of life We also want to continue our strong protection for our wildest landscapes – wild land is a nationally important asset.....”* Retention of this track we contend would be contrary to this commitment expressed in NPF3.
3. Scottish Planning Policy is a material consideration that carries significant weight. In Section 200 it states *“Wild land character is displayed in some of Scotland’s remoter upland, mountain and coastal areas, which are very sensitive to any form of intrusive human activity and have little or no capacity to accept new development. Plans should identify and safeguard the character of areas. 215. In areas of wild land (see paragraph 200), development may be appropriate in some circumstances. Further consideration will be required to demonstrate that any significant effects on the qualities of these areas can be substantially overcome by siting, design or other mitigation”*. The recent decisions on Allt Duine, Carn Gorm, Glencassley and Sallachy wind farms reinforce the level of protection which wild land areas should be accorded. This is a material consideration with regard to this application.
4. Retention would result in continued physical and visual scarring of the Braeroy – Glen Shirra – Creag Meagaidh, Wild Land Area 19.
5. The retention of this track would result in an additional man made feature unnecessarily impacting on this sensitive environment. The existing ‘Wade road’ has been used for centuries to traverse this area and to allow access to the land for sporting and recreational usage. Whilst the continuing use of the Wade road may not be the ideal and optimal solution for the Culachy Estate Ltd it is the best solution for the environment and the receiving landscape and supports SPP2 above. Approving another track to cut through this landscape cannot be justified.

The John Muir Trust wishes to record our objection to this application for the reasons stated above.

Yours sincerely

John Low
 Policy Officer
 John Muir Trust