

Energy Consents and Deployment Unit
Scottish Government
5 Atlantic Quay
150 Broomielaw
Glasgow
G2 8LU

Your Full Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)
Your Full Address
.....
..... Postcode

Application: Viking Energy Partnership Windfarm

I object to this planning application because: (fill in blank section with your **own reasons** for objecting. Use your **own words**, this makes your objection unique and ensures it is properly recognised and counted.

Remember: sign and date this letter. It must arrive by **19 November 2010**.

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Additional points to support my objection: (tick all those you think are relevant to your objection)

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LANDSCAPE The area of the proposed development consists of heather clad hills with a significant area of active blanket bog, i.e. peat forming. This habitat is an important carbon sink and is protected under European legislation. The size and scale of the proposed wind farm and its associated infrastructure will irrevocably change the character of this fragile landscape.

ECOLOGY Vast quantities of peat will be moved in order to construct 127 turbine bases, 13 quarries, 7 construction compounds, 3 substations and 65 miles of new roads. Blanket bog also serves to regulate water flow and this is very important during periods of high rainfall. If the bog surface is damaged then this capacity to regulate water flow is lost. There is a risk of serious landslips and severe erosion; changes in run-off are likely to damage burns and lochs where native brown trout are found. Possible changes in down slope hydrology are highly likely to impact on important blanket bog habitat. Sediment run-off could also affect the substantial aquaculture industry in the surrounding voes (sea-lochs). Blanket bog is a carbon sink and takes thousands of years to form; it actively absorbs and stores CO2. The release of this CO2 into the atmosphere will negate much or all of the perceived environmental benefits of the wind farm. Some aspects of the habitat management plan remain untried and untested in a Shetland environment. This project could irreparably damage globally important peat habitat that is scientifically recognised as vital in mitigating climate change.

TOURISM AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT The Shetland Visitor Survey 2006 states that tourists' "main inspiration to visit were birds, wildlife, nature and flora, followed by peace and quiet, remoteness and the scenery". This project will seriously harm this. It is also contrary to the Shetland Cultural Strategy plan that states we must "Safeguard the wildlife, sea life and high quality natural environment (including landscapes) of Shetland" and "Promote the sustainable wildlife, sea life and high quality natural environment of Shetland". Within the Shetland Structure Plan the Shetland Islands Council also states "The preservation of Shetland's built heritage and the maintenance of a clean, productive natural environment, with its associated landscapes and wildlife, is critical to the future development of the tourism industry".

PROXIMITY TO SETTLEMENTS This project will be one of the largest onshore wind farms in Europe, shoehorned into a very small island group. The 3.6 MW turbines 145 metres high have not been used onshore elsewhere in Europe to date. Despite past promises from Viking Energy, a Health Impact Assessment has not been carried out. Although not a statutory requirement, for a development of this size, it should be a necessary consideration. For a developer who continually quotes best working practice, this is a serious omission.

ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE The construction of this wind farm will require vast loads of industrial plant and materials moved over existing local roads for many years. Many roads will require alteration at considerable disruption to daily life. Road closures for transporting large numbers of component parts will also impact for many years.

BIRDS The wind farm will impact on breeding birds directly through death from collision and indirectly through displacement of breeding birds through disturbance or habitat change. Viking Energy's original EIA suggested that a minimum of 5,700 birds would be killed through collision during the 25- year life cycle of the wind farm. This includes nationally important red and amber listed species such as 152 Red throated Divers, 1,562 Golden Plovers, 1,460 Curlew, 262 Whimbrel and 252 Arctic Skuas.

Despite a 15% reduction in turbine numbers, this is still a very large windfarm. The mitigation measures proposed are speculative. A large windfarm built into an area with such a high density of nationally important breeding birds would still have an unacceptably adverse impact on these populations at a regional level.

The construction phase buffer zone required for these dense breeding populations would mean that during the four month breeding season work would be virtually impossible.

VISUAL IMPACT The turbines will be clearly visible in the panoramic views across Shetland. Views in Shetland are characterised by unspoilt openness across the isles and the dominance of the sky in the landscape, creating a sense of wilderness, remoteness, space and tranquillity. This development presents a loss of visual and recreational amenity for large areas of Shetland.

Sign here **Date**