

Petitioner submission of 3 February 2024

PE1864/YYYYYY: Increase the ability of communities to influence planning decisions for onshore windfarms

We would like to refer the Committee to our [previous submission](#) of 24 September 2023 where we supplied evidence to show that even the Wind Industry believe that local support should be required before planning permission can be granted for onshore wind farms.

We are now delighted to see that that we also have support in other places where we didn't look for any.

On Friday 24 November, an article appeared in the West Highland Free Press with the title 'Wind Farms "must not be imposed"'.

This article included comments from both Kate Forbes MSP and Ian Blackford MP.

Mr Blackford said that the wind farm projects proposed for Skye may be a "major opportunity for Scotland and the Highlands but can only go ahead with the "consent" of the community involved. He added "For too long the voices of communities have not been taken into account".

Ms Forbes said she was concerned by natural assets being "bought and sold by companies who primarily serve shareholders" rather than local residents, and added "Are local people by a majority, in favour or opposed?"

We would like to remind the Committee that the definition of "Community" is included in the glossary of NPF4 as noted by the Minister in his [submission](#) of 27 June 2023. Community does not, for example, solely have to be a Community Council, it can be any group of like-minded people. Community is not defined by formal constitution at local authority level so people living close to a development who are likely to be adversely affected and who group together to oppose a wind farm, (as opposed to a community who will receive financial benefit but who by majority will not be adversely affected) are a community in terms of NPF4.

It appears to us that the question which now needs to be asked is not “Who supports this petition?” but rather “Who doesn’t support this petition?” other than Scottish Ministers.

We would also like to update the Committee with regards to the DPEA meeting where it was suggested that the Faculty of Advocates may be able to help local communities with advocacy help at public inquiries. We are sorry to say that no help has been forthcoming and our petition request to “appoint an independent advocate to ensure that local participants are not bullied and intimidated during public inquiries”, as outlined in our [submission](#) of 9 July 2023, still stands.