



PRESS RELEASE

11 November 2009

Wind farm protest group censured for false advertising claims

The credibility of protesters objecting to the Dorenell Wind Farm proposal has been dealt a serious blow with the news that advertising claims made by Save Our Scenic Moray (SOS Moray) cannot be substantiated and are untruthful.

Previously SOS Moray has been supported publically by whisky magnate Grant Gordon and Jim Walker of Walker's Shortbread.

All complaints brought on behalf of wind farm developer Infinergy were upheld by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), the organisation that adjudicates on advertising disputes throughout the UK.

The ASA ruled that five claims made by SOS Moray in a leaflet distributed to 5,000 residents in Dufftown, Cabrach and nearby areas in April 2009 breached its clauses on substantiation and truthfulness.

The ruling also stated that SOS Moray's "circular sought to influence readers' views on the proposed development and "encouraged them to lodge objections with the Council Planning department."

The findings cast fresh doubt on the decision made by Moray Council's planning committee to refer the Dorenell proposal to public inquiry. In the recommendation to councillors to object to the Dorenell proposal, Moray's senior planning officer specifically highlighted the perceived threat to tourism and the local economy.

Supporters of the Dorenell proposal assert that it is inevitable that the false advertising claims made by SOS Moray influenced the planning process. At the time of the planning committee meeting, 604 public letters of support for the scheme had been received and 532 letters of objection.

The planning committee was ultimately divided at four votes apiece before the casting vote of the committee chairman Councillor Stewart Cree triggered a public inquiry.

The five upheld complaints were submitted to the ASA on behalf of Infinergy by its public relations advisors, Pendragon Consultants. Four of the complaints referred to spurious claims made by SOS Moray about the effect Dorenell Wind Farm might have on tourism, wildlife and the local economy. The claim that "Speyside businesses say NO to Dorenell Wind Farm" was also judged misleading because it exaggerated the level of opposition to the wind farm.

Charles Sandham, chief executive at Infinergy, said: "We feel vindicated that SOS Moray's scaremongering allegations have been exposed as baseless.

"In calling a public inquiry that will be both expensive and time consuming it is a pity that, in all likelihood, both the Moray planning officers and planning

committee have been unduly influenced by letters of objection written in response to falsehoods peddled by SOS Moray.

"In the interests of everyone, we would urge the council to reconsider its decision to refer Dorenell Wind Farm to an unnecessary public inquiry."

ENDS (427 words)

Notes to Editors

More information about Dorenell Wind Farm can be viewed at www.dorenellwindfarm.co.uk

The Advertising Standards Authority adjudication on SOS Moray can be read in full at www.asa.org.uk/asa/adjudications/public/

For more information please contact Alex Doyle or Carole Riley at Pendragon PR on 0161 786 8000.



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