

From: John O'Hagan
Sent: Wednesday 27 April 2022 15:47
To: cdp <cdp@leitrimcoco.ie>
Subject: Leitrim County Development Plan

To whom it may concern,

There is a growing body of evidence that the mining of gold is an energy intensive and carbon heavy process that has the potential to negatively impact a wide range of areas including water quality, landscape, agriculture, tourism and biodiversity amongst others. The carbon heavy, energy intensive nature of the industry is also not compatible with the sustainable future that we are trying to create for this and following generations. The possible development of such an extractive industry would be incompatible with our obligations to urgently tackle climate change and the worst impacts of the climate emergency. This matter has become all the more urgent with the granting of prospecting licenses for 47 townlands in the county. The Leitrim County Development plan should reflect the unanimous will of Leitrim County Councillors who have registered their opposition to gold mining.

Section 12.6 - Climate Action

There are serious contradictions in **Subsection 12.6.2 Wind Energy** and the objectives are directly at odds with the objectives referred to in Section 5 - Tourism.

In relation to the capacity study as reported in Figure 12.4 in the Plan, the capacity study concludes that there is very limited capacity to absorb future large scale proposed developments in the form of multiple wind turbines and wind farms. On the page following Figure 12.4 in the Plan, it refers to the fact that the RES has identified the potential for Leitrim to increase its wind energy operational capacity by 90%

There is only one objective in the plan for wind energy and it doesn't mention offshore wind generation.

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- Looking at the wind speeds off the Sligo, Leitrim & Donegal coasts, the objective should be to develop offshore wind generation. The NW has the highest wind speeds off the coast in the country and huge progress has been made in recent months on the technology for offshore wind generation which is much more efficient than onshore.
- In tandem with the development of technology for offshore wind should be factors to mitigate damage to marine and bird life.
- Further development of onshore wind farms in Leitrim would work against the measures to mitigate loss of biodiversity.
- The wind farms are of no benefit to the local community in job creation or reduction of energy costs.
- Onshore wind farms on the typical geology of the Leitrim hills can cause serious landslides with devastating effects on biodiversity, water quality and communities and with Dough mountain.
- The proximity of Dough Mountain to Lough Melvin SAC is of huge concern. Dough Mountain has recently, under a 2020 geology study been nominated as an National Heritage Area of geological

importance. The salmon and trout species in Lough Melvin which gives it its unique status needs the utmost protection.

- The danger of landslides and the inevitable runoff of silt and suspended solids during wind farm construction into the spawning grounds (feeder streams from Dough Mountain into the Lough Melvin Catchment) could spell disaster for the rare fish species in Lough Melvin.

- **Conclusion**

The renewable energy transition is a necessity and jobs are a necessity.

But any large scale developments such as onshore wind farms and mining needs to be considerate of the environment and the vulnerable communities they are being implemented within.

These proposals, if successful, will be devastating to our local environment, wildlife and community.

Areas of peatland bog need to be protected, not exploited, as they are rapidly dwindling natural storage units for carbon. They may only cover about 3% of the world's land surface, but store at least twice as much carbon as all of Earth's standing forests.

We need to work towards a cleaner future, learn from past mistakes and weigh up what comes before profit.

The future of our children depends upon this.

Kind Regards,
John