

Director – Energy Assessments
Planning and Assessment
Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124

DATE:12th December 2022

To whom it may concern

Re: HILLS OF GOLD WIND FARM AMENDMENT REPORT No. SSD9679

- Please see my submission to the above mentioned development application during Public Exhibition of Amendment Report, November 2022
- I hereby declare that I object to the Hills of Gold Wind Farm proposal ID No. SSD.9679
- I would like my personal detail withheld
- I have not made any reportable political donations in the previous 2 years
- I acknowledge and accept the Department disclaimer and declaration.

Objection.

I would ask the Department and the Proponent to revisit my previous objection alongside this, my current objection to the Amendments, as I do not believe my concerns were ever adequately addressed in the Proponent's Response to Submissions.

I have reread my previous objection and I feel my final words ring ever more true:

Our landscape is not an inanimate backdrop to important human activity, it is a living, breathing entity much larger than this EIS can ever attempt to fathom.

What Engie is proposing to do to our landscape is prioritise the drive for renewables at any cost, even if that means enacting harm to the land, skies, waterways and community.

The way we value our landscape, our lifestyles, the AMENITY of our landscape and community, both tangible and intangible should be the benchmark by which this project's appropriateness is assessed. This proposal is clearly not appropriate – it asks us to accept 64 HUGE turbines on a picturesque ridgeline which hugs the valley of Nundle – a breathtaking backdrop to our daily life. It asks us to accept turbines neighbouring Ben Halls Gap Nature Reserve and Ben Halls Gap State Forest, home to the Critically Endangered BHG Sphagnum Moss Cool Temperate Rainforest (recently listed under the EPBC Act), home to an environment so diverse and delicate we cannot begin to truly comprehend what Australia as a country loses if it were damaged (in the name of a “green” project at that!). It asks us to accept that cash and stewardship can offset losing these environments, losing what we already have, what we should be the guardians of. It asks us to accept direct impacts to habitat for the Barking Owl, Booroolong Frog, Border Thick-tailed Gecko, Eastern Cave Bat, Eastern Pygmy-possum, Greater Glider Large-eared Pied Bat, Powerful Owl, Sooty Owl, Southern Myotis, Spotted Tailed Quoll, Squirrel Glider and Masked Owl, to name but a few. It asks us to accept the extreme cut-and-fill on steep gradient hills that is required to cater to roads and infrastructure including the substation, concrete batching plant, battery, operations and maintenance building and transmission lines/towers/easement. It asks us to accept potentially compromised aerial firefighting, red aviation lights illuminating our dark night skies, pollution to waterways, clearing of 447 hectares of vegetation, clearing of 46.2 hectares of Koala Habitat...and now!! Now (!) the proponent asks us to accept amended transport routes right through the heart of our village, routes that will change the face of the village forever, routes they have previously rejected because of the impacts...how can this be a legitimate proposal?

We do not accept this, our community does NOT consent, I do NOT consent.

This industrial wind farm proposal will irrevocably alter the character of the landscape and our community, it will destroy its cultural significance, and a part of Australia that is held in high-esteem by thousands of people. This proposal has already wreaked havoc on a previously vibrant and functioning community. Engie have utilised a series of unethical practices to pit neighbour against neighbour. The very fabric of our close-knit community has been eroded by lies, omissions and arrogant and insulting “community engagement”.

Surely there are many other projects in the pipeline that meet the needs of our renewables targets without irrevocably destroying an environment and community? We are not even in a REZ! Hills of Gold Wind Farm proposes wholesale destruction of our environment and amenity...and they have the temerity to call it a “green” project.

What Engie fails to address at every turn is the way our community VALUES our landscape and our community. They believe that their amendments and solutions to their transport issues are acceptable to a community who currently enjoys an idyllic, quiet, green, picturesque, clean community and landscape.

As the project stands, the proponent did not adequately address ANY concern outlined in objections to their first EIS. Their Response to Submissions was woefully late and light on detail, and it seems immediately out-of-date. Now, we see within this Amendment a wholesale EDIT of our village in the name of this project. Could it get any worse? (Well, by the poor reputation and unethical practices this Proponent has consistently shown within our community, yes, it can!). There have been no protections for us – we have been at the mercy of the “process” – our lives taken over by the worry of this proposal.

How can they justify persisting with a project when a local majority have objected and the Tamworth Regional Council have unanimously objected? It beggars belief! The arrogance!

How does Engie even propose to get the infrastructure to the ridgeline? Does the Department think extreme cut-and-fill roads, with 10m high batters an appropriate solution? The project is surrounded by Non-Associated dwellings – is not his proof enough this project is not accepted? Where is the engineering studies for these transport roads? What about the visual amenity of this? There has been no adequate assessment of the community’s opinion on these visual changes, but in saying this, I do not trust that a sufficient study could take place if conducted by the proponent – they’ve previously rated our range as “Low” on their visual value scale. Why has there never been adequate Visual Impact studies distributed to the community? With roads, infrastructure and clearing depicted? Why has the amended transport route not been assessed for visual impact and amenity within the village of Nundle? There have been no visual montages of the transports options, the “Nundle Bypass”, the employee car park – as a resident of the village I would like to see the destruction depicted, please. I deem these extreme road modifications to be just a part of the project holistically as the turbines on the ridgeline. I would like to get an idea of how they propose to mitigate the atrocities they’re proposing – planting trees so we can’t see?

Unfortunately all montages previously supplied have been woefully inadequate, bleached and from distant perspectives. How can we trust the proponent to ever give an adequate depiction of impacts? Below is a photo montage provided by Moir Landscape Architecture depicting the view of turbines on the intersection of Jenkins Street and Oakenville street (photograph taken on the far side of the intersection). A person could be forgiven for thinking you couldn’t see turbines from this intersection. The second image created from a close up view of Moir’s montage (with the sky slightly darkened) – shows that, yes, we will in fact see turbines from the village.

Photomontage 02



Proposed View - 60 degree Field of View



Closer up: Yes, we will see turbines from our Main Street.

Why is the Socio Economic Assessment (Appendix R) completed in September 2021 by SGS Economics and Planning included in the Amended Development application documents? Any surveys conducted and used to inform this study are egregiously out-of-date and cannot sufficiently reflect the socio-economic impacts or opinions held by community members, as detailed information on the amended transport routes has only just been released. The transport routes are now coming directly through the villages of Nundle and Hanging Rock, with one route (the "Nundle Bypass") requiring major roadworks and the removal of a house, alongside the removal of mature trees and electrical poles. To name it the "Nundle Bypass" is surely sarcastic in it's irony? It "bypasses" Nundle a mere 100 metres from our main street and "exits" within the village confines! The Nundle "Loop Road" will bring OSOM vehicles on a wide loop through the village, requiring major roadworks and removal of mature trees to enable this. Surely this Appendix cannot stand in for our community's opinions on these major changes to their lives. No route is acceptable – the impacts are unresolvable.

If this submission portrays a sense of outrage it is because that is how I feel – completely outraged. This is the 5th year of dealing with the spectre of this proposal – with no clear end in sight. When will the Response to Submissions be submitted? In 12 months time, like the last? Will the Department approve submitting yet more Amendments? Will we face another Exhibition Period? When will these unresolvable impacts be acknowledged? I ask the Department to request the proponent withdraw this proposal.