

Mr Anthony Ko,
Planning NSW,

Dear Mr Ko,

As per our conversation this afternoon I wish to lodge a formal objection to the “Hills of Gold Wind Farm” proposed for Northern NSW by the French Company Engie.

I am a professional Mechanical Engineer with 40 years experience in electricity generation, mining and manufacturing. My experience includes running a complete power station (responsibility for operation and maintenance) which included the utilisation of waste heat, a gas turbine, oxygen plants and multiple steam turbines.

There are a number of overwhelming reasons why the proposal should not go ahead. The reasons include local/regional issues as well as national issues affecting the NEM.

They are as follows:

- A large number of similar wind farms in South Australia have resulted in a situation where the AEMO are forced to **curtail** their output in times of significant wind because the grid cannot handle the excessive generation. This makes them a terrible investment for the Australian community - because one way or another - the community is paying for an asset which cannot be used to its' full potential. The same problem is bound to be exacerbated by the Hills of Gold Wind Farm proposal - whether because of local or regional limitations in transmission line capacity. You can confirm my statement about **curtailment** in multiple reports from the AEMO.
- In the South Australian grid, it is quite frequent that the AEMO issues directions to owners of gas fired generators to start and run their machines because there is a risk of grid instability due an excessive wind and solar generation level compared to generation from large stable rotating machines such as steam turbines. This instability is very dangerous for a grid because the tiniest transient or incident like a car hitting a power pole can potentially trip the whole grid. The AEMO are very nervous when a large amount of wind generation exists and actually pay the owners to start their gas turbines to give stability. South Australians then have to pay for the very expensive gas fired generation – highly ironic in a market full of supposedly “free” renewables! This very regular market intervention can be seen in the market notices here: <https://aemo.com.au/en/market-notices?MarketNoticeList=3and> a recent example is: **82449MARKET INTERVENTION28/01/2021 05:27:22 PM**. The very last thing that the NSW grid needs is more wind turbines which will then push us in the same direction as S.A.
- **Engie are not a fit and proper Company** to have an increased share in our Nation's generation fleet. They knew that by shutting Hazelwood that wholesale prices would increase massively – as did all of us in industry. When a company is involved in key strategic roles like electricity generation in our society, they have a duty to behave in

an ethical and responsible manner – otherwise they lose the social licence to operate. I quote Paula Conboy from the Australian Energy regulator:

"The impact of the Hazelwood closure has been, and continues to be, significant right across the [National Electricity Market]," Ms Conboy said.

You can read an article about this here: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-03-29/hazelwood-electricity-prices-climate-pollution-gas-supply/9599998>

Shutting Hazelwood so quickly – without a reliable replacement - was irresponsible and showed a **profound lack of respect for the Australian people**. My business – predominantly associated with Steelmaking - and hundreds of other Australian businesses were put at risk because of the higher electricity prices, blackouts and slowbacks in production directly caused by Engie's deliberate pre-meditated actions. It is beyond belief that Governments now want to **reward** Engie with a wind farm such as Hills of Gold after their brutal actions with Hazelwood??? Especially when you bear in mind that the large scale renewable certificates and other Government subsidies which Engie would receive from the wind farm would be funded by Australian electricity users!

- Wind farms such as the one proposed, only produce 30% of their installed capacity over time and require other very large "hidden" investments in order to actually contribute to the grid. They require horrendously expensive and inefficient batteries or pumped hydro, they require large amounts of capital to be spent on transmission lines and – as evidenced by the current Hunter Valley proposal from Scott Morrison and Angus Taylor – even after all that investment – they require back-up gas fired generation. Morrison and Taylor's proposal uses gas which is both export **and** import exposed and very expensive. The Hills of Gold proposal does not properly signal up all of these massive hidden on-costs and strategic risks and **therefore must be rejected as invalid**.
- There is very large Political risk associated with wind turbine proposals now. The Labor Party are currently tearing themselves apart because they have abandoned traditional workers in favour of city environmentalists. Butler being forcibly removed from his energy portfolio this week is evidence of this, as are Joel Fitzgibbon's statements. Similarly, the Nationals are standing up for regional Australians and our Nation's wealth generating sectors – against the environmentalist city Liberals – with Matt Canavan's recent announcements favouring the reliability and reduced cost of coal fired generation. Approval of this wind farm would generate significant anxiety and unnecessary tensions in both the local and national community. A large proportion of the community actually understand the negatives of wind generation – as evidenced by Politicians from both sides being critical of it and publicly supporting coal fired generation. **It would be irresponsible of Planning NSW to proceed with approval of this wind farm against that community backdrop.**
- The Hills of Gold area is a very special part of our Nation. It is special because of its heritage, natural beauty, peaceful rural amenity and the birds and animals there. A large wind farm, such as the one proposed, would actually be an environmental

disaster. In areas around Crookwell in NSW and Western Victoria, the large wind farms are a major scar on the landscape with real environmental negatives. Locals in those areas are “up in arms” at the new roads, out of control tree clearing, ugly transmission lines and **dead wedge tailed eagles** on the ground around the turbines. Wedge tailed eagles are common around the hills of gold area. There is no question that wind turbines kill a large number of Australian birds and in fact even extreme environmentalists understand this: <https://esdnews.com.au/bob-brown-opposes-robbins-island-wind-farm/>

Thankyou for considering my objection Mr Ko and if you need further information or clarification I am happy to help. You are welcome to contact me via phone or email – or if it helps, I would be happy to attend your office.

Thankyou and best regards,

Ian Waters.