

5<sup>th</sup> March, 2019

Dear xxxxxxxx,

**GLEN ETIVE RUN-OF-THE-RIVER HYDRO-SCHEMES**

**18/02738/FUL Allt Charnan; 18/02739/FUL Allt Ceitlein; 18/02740 FUL Allt Fhaolain; 18/02741/FUL Allt Mheuran; 18/02742/FUL Allt Chaorainn; Allt nan Gaoirean 18/03024/FUL and 18/03026/FUL Allt a Bhiorain;**

We the undersigned are writing in support of a recent letter concerning the above schemes by John W Mackay asking them to be called in by the Scottish Government.

We represent the concerned public under the campaigning name **Save Glen Etive**. The group arose in response to public outcry caused by the approval of these schemes on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2019 by Highland South planning committee. Following an amendment for a full council hearing, three of the seven schemes are now under review, to be heard on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

Within the first 24 hours of the internet campaign, 1,300 people had shown their support. The campaign has over 3,000 supporters and growing. Furthermore, a petition to protect the glen from these schemes currently stands well over 8,000 signatures, and our web pages have been inundated with messages of support from Scotland, the wider UK and around the world. We also note over 650 objections to the schemes, a significant number for such a remote and sparsely populated area.

This groundswell of public support for the special landscape qualities of Glen Etive well underlines Mr Mackay's conclusions;

*1. National landscape significance*

The Ben Nevis, Glen Coe and Black Mount region, of which Glen Etive is a part, is a nationally significant area of natural beauty and heritage, and was recognised in 1981 as a National Scenic Area (NSA). Glen Etive is also a Special Protection Area (SPA) and the three schemes still under review are within a Wild Land Area (WLA9). These designations are in place to ensure the landscape's protection from inappropriate development. The International Union for Conservation identifies NSAs as Category V Protected Landscapes, therefore classifying the Glen as 'an area of distinct character with significant ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value'. Glen Etive must also be considered an integral part of 'Scotland's finest landscapes' and its designations must be recognised and upheld.

*2. High recreational value*

The landscape of Glen Etive is not only designated protected land, it is also a mecca for an enormously varied range of recreational activities, including but not limited to;

mountaineering, kayaking, rock climbing, mountain biking, and photography. Additionally Glen Etive attracts tourists from all over the world, where they enjoy the remote scenery through low level walks and access from the single track road.

3. *National Policy compliance and small hydro-power schemes*

When considering the energy benefits versus the landscape costs, these plans producing in the region of only 6.5 MW, would not significantly contribute to renewable energy production on a national scale. Run-of-river hydro-power schemes result in unpredictable energy production, and in this case the proposed schemes would rely on tributaries with particularly stochastic flows. The hydro-power developments therefore come up far short of a case to support development within an NSA, where adverse effects may only be outweighed by 'social, environmental or economic benefits of national importance'. They therefore run contrary to National Planning Policy. It is also unclear how the developer will mitigate the high impact nature of the construction within Glen Etive's sensitive landscape.

4. *The wrong schemes in the wrong place*

When the construction associated with seven hydro-schemes is considered, for example, access roads, power stations, bridges, track improvement, and intakes, they together represent an unprecedented level of development within Glen Etive. The schemes should therefore be viewed as one single scheme - not seven - and the cumulative impact of it assessed as such.

5. *SNH approval of the proposed developments*

This *major development* will dramatically affect the integrity of the landscape taken as a whole, the *whole* being what is protected for public enjoyment. As such, the SNH positions taken on *integrity* and *special qualities* need to be questioned.

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While we are supportive of renewable energy production in the correct context, we firmly believe that these are the wrong schemes in the wrong place and that allowing them takes a decisive step towards undermining Scottish national and natural heritage.

On that basis we are moved to register our support for Mr Mackay's request that these schemes be called in.

Sincerely,

Texa Sim  
Richard Bannister  
Tim Parkin  
Nick Kempe  
David Lintern

Michael Stirling-Aird