

Wind farm faces protests over land bid

A bid to force land owners to sell part of their sites to operators of what will be one of the world's largest offshore windfarms is facing protests from the owners of East Lothian's nuclear power station.

SSE Renewables are behind the [Berwick Bank Wind Farm project](#), which will bring energy onshore at Skateraw and then require a connection into the National Grid at Branxton, near Torness. But their application to Scottish Ministers for a Compulsory Purchase Order to be approved has brought objections from Torness Power Station operators EDF, as well as Network Rail and private land owners.

The objectors raise concerns about the speed in which the order was submitted, a lack of time given to them to respond, the 'excessive' land requirements included and the loss of prime agricultural land.

Network Rail said it objected because the proposed route for cables involved railway land but added negotiations with the applicant were ongoing to try and come to an agreement.

However EDF said the order was 'premature' arguing that the wind farm had not received consent yet and the need for compulsory purchase was not yet established.

The Torness operator added the impact on the power station had not been adequately addressed saying "The project will have an operational impact and an impact on the defueling of the

Torness Nuclear Power Station.

The wind farm has asked Scottish Ministers to approve the Compulsory Purchase Order to allow them to acquire the rights and land to “construct, operate and remove electricity transmission lines, plant and ancillary infrastructure between Mean Low Water Springs at Skateraw and the Grid Connection Point at Branxton”.

In a statement the firm said the order would affect four private landowners who would be required to sell land with a further ten ordered to give permanent rights to use the land to them and seven private landowners who will have temporary rights created over their land.

In total 15 objections have been lodged to the order on behalf of landowners, EDF, Network Rail and other local businesses which will be impacted.

ScottishPower has also lodged objections amid concern the project could impact on its £1.3billion Eastern Link work.

Scottish Ministers will hold a public inquiry unless the company is able to come to an agreement with concerned parties which lead them to withdraw their objections.

by Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter

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