

PE1864/MMMMMM: Increase the ability of communities to influence planning decisions for onshore windfarms

Tim Eagle MSP written submission, 10 September 2025

I am writing in strong support of this petition which seeks to empower communities across Scotland to have greater influence over planning decisions for onshore windfarms. The recent second Convention of Highlands and Islands Community Councils, held in Inverness on 13 August 2025, underlines just how urgently this reform is needed. Over 250 delegates, representing 60 community councils and around 80,000 residents—including many from Moray—attended the event, which culminated in a cross-party agreement advocating for a debate in the Scottish Parliament on the importance of local democracy in decision-making.

This landmark gathering demonstrated that community councils—long recognized as statutory consultees—are no longer satisfied with one-way consultations; they demand a genuine voice. Their calls for a parliamentary debate reflect concerns about how decisions are made, especially in rural and remote landscapes.

In Moray specifically, frustration is growing. Communities feel overlooked amid the rapid expansion of large-scale renewable infrastructure, with residents often lacking the resources to mount meaningful engagement or find expert support.

This Petition offers remedies the committees are well aware of including more empowering planning legislation, ensuring local authorities provide communities with professional support, and appointing independent advocates during public inquiries to safeguard fair participation.

The meeting in Inverness i believe found a consensus that local democracy is not a luxury—it is the foundation of responsible governance and environmental stewardship. I urge the Committee to take this momentum forward. Please advance Petition PE1864 to ensure communities in Moray, the Highlands and Islands, and across Scotland can shape the future of their land with dignity, expertise, and genuine influence.

Yours sincerely,

Tim Eagle MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament

Highlands and Islands Region