

MoD under attack from wind farms, say campaigners

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The Ministry of Defence is “under attack” from wind farms, according to newly released documents that show that the agency raises formal concerns over proposed sites in Scotland at least once a week on average.

Defence officials have objected to schemes or sought assurances that they will not interfere with national security on 345 occasions since 2016, the equivalent of 69 every year.

Wind farm opponents argue that the government agency faces an onslaught of applications across the country, many of which involve “mega-turbines” more than 200m tall that can pose a risk to aircraft and affect military radar.

To raise questions over a proposed wind farm or challenge the development, the MoD must often draft a letter to local authority planners or Scottish government officials, which takes up time and resources.

Wind farm opponents argue that developers – who stand to reap huge profits over a wind farm’s average 25-year life span – should pay the costs.

“It’s remarkable that the MoD has to spend so much time responding to Scottish wind farm developments week in, week out,” said Iain Milligan, spokesman for campaign group Save Our Hills, which used freedom of information laws to find out how often the MoD had raised concerns about wind farms.

“Many parts of Scotland are at saturation point with onshore wind farms, and communities have had enough.”

Documents released to Save Our Hills revealed that the MoD had formally

objected to the construction of 16 wind farms since 2016.

A recent submission saw military officials raise concerns about nine giant turbines planned near the village of Corsock in Dumfries and Galloway.

They sought assurances that the onshore wind farm by German-owned firm Energiekontor would not interfere with military training and “not adversely affect defence interests”.

In 2019, military officials warned that plans to extend the Crystal Rig wind farm in the Lammermuir Hills would cause “unacceptable interference” to air defence systems. Earlier this month, plans were approved for 200m tall turbines on the Dun Law wind farm, also in the Lammermuir Hills, despite MoD concerns.

Morag Watson, director of policy at Scottish Renewables, said: “Wind power is the cheapest form of new energy generation and projects, whose siting is overseen by Scotland’s planning system – one of the most robust in the world – provide local and national economic benefits, as well as displacing the carbon emissions which cause climate change.

“Rural Scotland has a central role to play in delivering the increases in generation capacity needed to meet our growing need for clean power, and it is right that the planning system hears from as wide a range of voices as possible so that informed decisions can be made.”

A spokeswoman for the MoD said: “It is necessary for us to review wind farm applications and make relevant representations to safeguard defence capabilities.”