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Our Reference: OUT-394/24



15 January 2024

Office of the Independent Planning Commission NSW
Suite 15.02 Level 15 135 King Street
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Attention: Commissioner Clare Sykes

Dear Sir/Madam,

Hills of Gold Wind Farm (SSD-9679)

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the Commission with our views on the above project at our meeting held on 15 January 2024.

As discussed, Upper Hunter Shire Council is generally satisfied with the Department's Assessment Report and recommended conditions, however, it would be appreciated if consideration could be given to the following comments:

1. Condition A22/ Appendix 3 - we request that the payment details of the General Terms of the Applicant's VPA Offer (Appendix 3) be amended to make it clear that the CIV (Capital Investment Value) of the project is calculated at the start of construction (not at DA stage). This would allow for any significant delays in construction commencement and avoid a possible decrease in the value of the contributions in real terms.
2. Condition B30/ Appendix 7 – The proposed haulage route includes an unnamed road at chainage 174.8. We note that this road is privately owned and question if owner's consent has been granted for the use of the road and any required upgrades.
3. Council is concerned that turbines and associated infrastructure could be abandoned at the end of the asset's useful life, leaving property owners to decommission and remove turbines. The applicant should be required to provide some form of security (eg bank guarantee) to ensure turbines are decommissioned. We note that the draft Private Agreement Guideline prepared by DPE and currently on public exhibition as part of the State government's Draft Energy Policy Framework, recommends that host agreements between a project developer and a landowner includes the provision of security by the developer.

All correspondence to:

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Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Mathew Pringle, Director Environmental & Community Services, on 02 6540 1100 during normal business hours.

Yours faithfully



Mathew Pringle
DIRECTOR ENVIRONMENTAL & COMMUNITY SERVICES