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**Subject:** Objection to Hills of Gold re-submission  
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**Proposed Hills of Gold (HOG) Wind Farm development - New planning powers created to override the entire planning process.**

I strongly object to the newly formed planning powers the Department of Planning, Infrastructure and Housing (DPIE) has created for itself.

In the case of HOG wind farm, 14 turbines were rejected by DPIE based on environmental and community issues. DPIE has now overridden their own decision by creating the Independent Expert Advisory Panel for Energy Transition (IEAPET). It appears this panel has been given the capacity to recommend overruling any environmental or community issues arising from the planning process. DPIE has then used this recommendation to overturn its own findings. The reason given by IEAPET is that the developer complained the project would not be viable without the 14 turbines, and they have decided what constitutes public interest.

This action sets a dangerous new precedent. The planning process can now be disregarded by government bodies as they can set up their own advisory panels to override planning systems developed over the long term to consider, balance and incorporate legal, environmental, community and local government concerns.

It is very difficult for anyone to determine the veracity of the developers claims of financial viability due to commercial in confidence, and the approach used by DPIE and IEAPET to override what is ultimately a democratic process is opaque and largely removed from public scrutiny. Furthermore, it appears that developers can now simply claim financial viability as a reason to override environmental and community concerns.

This outcome instigated by DPIE sets a dangerous new precedent. The public at large should be very concerned that government departments can now disregard many decades of developing planning frameworks, and override them based on the priorities of a few members of a department's inner hierarchy.

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