



Iona Community Objection to MachairWind offshore wind farm proposal

The Iona Community submits this formal objection to the proposed offshore wind development adjacent to the Inner Hebrides.

As an ecumenical Christian community committed to peace, social justice, and the integrity of creation, we occupy a unique position in this consultation. We are a non-profit international organisation with bases in Glasgow and on Iona and Mull. We have a global membership of 3,000. Some of our staff, volunteers and Members live in Iona Abbey and are part of the island community on Iona. We run Iona Abbey for the benefit of others, and as an expression of our commitment to life in community.

Our members include a wide range of professionals, academics and experts from across the globe in a range of fields relevant to this issue. Our historic home on Iona places us in direct relationship with the fragile ecosystems and unique cultural and spiritual landscapes of the Inner Hebrides. Simultaneously, our longstanding commitment to global justice demands that we confront the climate emergency with absolute urgency.

The climate crisis is a spiritual crisis. We view the rapid transition away from fossil fuels as an act of repentance and restoration, with a profound moral and spiritual mandate. Iona Abbey received a Silver EcoCongregations Scotland Award in July 2026. We have pioneered wind and solar power at our centres on Iona and on Mull, and have a [public position on environmental justice](#). Refusing or needlessly delaying renewable projects out of pure convenience or aesthetics is a luxury the earth cannot afford. We actively support the rapid, just transition to renewable energy.

However, true justice cannot be achieved by sacrificing local ecological and human communities for administrative convenience, economic profit and extractive corporate practices.

The question for ministers is not whether offshore wind should be developed in Scottish waters, but whether this proposal complies with Scotland's statutory planning and environmental protection framework, principles of community wealth building, and whether claimed environmental benefits have been well evidenced.

Given deep concern that none of these conditions are met, and based on our objections below, we object to the MachairWind offshore wind farm proposal.

We believe that the scope and scale of this project would have a significant adverse effect, environmentally, culturally and spiritually, on the local ecosystem and on the economy and wellbeing of local communities.

Key Grounds for Objection

1. Failure of Ecological Care (Care for Creation)

- a. Unacceptable Risk to Marine Wildlife: The proposed boundary threatens critical habitats within local Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), risking severe disruption to the seabed environment, cetaceans, including harbour porpoises, and vulnerable seabird colonies.
- b. Insufficiency of Pre-Construction Data: The current Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) relies heavily on mitigation models rather than precautionary avoidance.
- c. Violation of Sacred Space: The waters of the Inner Hebrides are not a barren industrial zone; they are part of a sacred web of life.

2. Erosion of Community Sovereignty and Hospitality

- a. Extractive Corporate Models: This proposal mirrors historical patterns of highland and island exploitation, where local assets are extracted for distant financial gain.
- b. Inadequate Local Consent: True consultation requires deep listening and community co-design, not a box-ticking exercise that leaves island residents feeling powerless.
- c. Threat to Island Ways of Life: The scale of the development threatens the fragile tourism and fishing economies that sustain these remote island populations.

3. Deficit in Landscape and Spiritual Heritage Protection

- a. Industrialisation of sacred spaces: The Inner Hebrides hold unique spiritual value as places of silence, contemplation, and natural beauty. Iona and its Abbey is a significant cultural site of outstanding universal value to human-kind. Its long-term, 1500 year spiritual and christian credentials will be severely negatively impacted by this development.
- b. Irreversible Impact: The immense scale and proximity of these turbines will permanently industrialise historic seascapes that have offered spiritual sanctuary for centuries.

We call for an urgent public conversation on energy justice, and a just transition from fossil fuels, building on the work of Scotland's Climate Assembly of 2020/2022 which the Iona Community co-convened.

Rev. Ruth Harvey, Leader and Jo Morling, Council Convener
in the name of the Iona Community, Iona Abbey, July 2026