



PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE01474

Name of petitioner

David Milne

Petition title

Governance and propriety during the Menie Development

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to hold a public inquiry into the way local government, Scottish Ministers and other relevant public bodies conducted themselves throughout their dealings with the Trump Organisation in relation to the Menie project.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

Concerns have been raised with MSPs, Scottish Ministers and Councillors on numerous occasions, and previous petitions on related issues have been submitted. The 2008 public local inquiry considered only the merits of the project itself, and did not consider any of the issues of greatest local and national importance: those around governance and propriety.

The Local Government and Communities Committee's Planning Application Processes (Menie Estate) report in 2008 predates many of the important developments, including the granting of planning permission later that year, and a wealth of other information has subsequently been revealed, including through the documentary You've Been Trumped.

Petition background information

This petition does not seek to have the actual planning decision itself reviewed - the inquiry sought is entirely into the propriety of official contact with the Trump Organisation.

Since 2005 a wide range of Scottish public bodies have taken an interest in developments around the golf resort planned for Menie by Donald Trump's Trump Organisation. The list includes Aberdeenshire Council, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Enterprise, Grampian Police, and Scottish Ministers (both Labour/Lib Dem and SNP).

Mr Trump has alleged that promises were made to him that a proposed offshore windfarm near his resort would not go ahead by then First Minister Jack McConnell, and the Trump Organisation have held meetings and discussions with representatives of these organisations, including with the current First Minister.

Especially following the "You've Been Trumped" documentary, there is concern that improper commitments may have been made to the Trump Organisation over the last seven years, and that the local environment and local people may have been sidelined by both officials and elected representatives.

Mr Trump himself reported commitments from the current First Minister and his predecessor about the proposed offshore wind farm in relation to the golf project, as set out here:

<http://news.stv.tv/north/304771-us-billionaire-donald-trump-to-give-evidence-to-msps-on-renewable-energy/>

In addition, the Scottish Government also "called in" the application after its rejection by Aberdeenshire Council's Infrastructure Services Committee, as set out in sections 14 and others, including notably 168, of the 2008 Report by the Local Government and Communities Committee, here:

<http://archive.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/lgc/reports-08/lgr08-05.htm>

It also has never been established what communications were made between the current First Minister and Mr Trump, and which of these were made in Mr Salmond's capacity as First Minister and which in his capacity as the constituency MSP from 2007 onwards. Notably, we do not have records of what happened at this meeting the very day before Scottish Ministers made their unprecedented decision to call in this planning application after it had been rejected:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/north_east/7135266.stm

That same link also notes the decision by the Chief Planner to meet the Trump Organisation: a meeting for which minutes are also not available. Given the intense public interest in this project, which has been a) against the local plan, b) destroyed an SSSI, the highest level of protection afforded in this country, and c) threatened the homes of some of Mr Salmond's constituents, it is essential that the full facts are known.

I wish to see an inquiry to establish what communications and commitments were made in private to the Trump Organisation, and to consider whether there are improvements that can be made to procedure and best practice in the light of those findings, especially with regard to contact with planning applicants, the ability of Ministers to call in applications after rejection rather than allowing an appeal, and around equality of access to the planning process for both applicants and objectors.

Unique web address

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/GettingInvolved/Petitions/PE01474>

Related information for petition

Do you wish your petition to be hosted on the Parliament's website to collect signatures online?

NO

How many signatures have you collected so far?

12850

Closing date for collecting signatures online

N/A

Comments to stimulate online discussion