

Press and Journal:

WINDFARM PROTESTERS FAIL TO WIN SUPPORT

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Anti-windfarm campaigners from Skye yesterday failed to win support from their constituency MSP as they called for compensation for falling house prices.

A petition submitted by Edinbane resident Judith Hodgson has called for the parliament to "consider and debate" financial redress for people whose property values and businesses are affected by windfarm developments.

Her submission described a "Robin Hood in reverse situation," in which developers could receive public subsidies, while "economically-damaged" individuals gained no compensation.

She claimed that total property prices in Edinbane could dwindle by as much as £4million, based on 50 properties worth an average of £200,000 falling in value by 40%.

She also claimed that hotels, guesthouses and campsites could close if they lost 25% of their business.

But, at the parliament's public petitions committee yesterday, committee member and Ross, Skye and Inverness West MSP John Farquhar Munro said he was unconvinced by Mrs Hodgson's arguments, which he said were based on "conjecture".

"There is nothing in this that would indicate to me that there is a problem," he said. "It makes an assumption about the drop in property values in proximity to windfarms. That hasn't been established beyond any reasonable doubt.

"Compensation for residents who find their amenity disturbed by a proliferation of windfarms is a consideration for planning departments. I am sure they do take due consideration of these issues when approving or rejecting an application."

Committee member Helen Eadie said she was concerned that a move for compensation could set a precedent and open doors for all manner of claims.

Members agreed to write to the Scottish Executive, seeking its views on the petition.