

Dear Sir,

I wish to object in the strongest terms to the latest attempt to bring about further economic prioritisation in planning matters. As a local Cavanacaw Goldmine resident I have first hand knowledge of how three Environment Ministers Wilson, Poots, and now Attwood's pursuance of this approach has resulted in an environmental scandal.

In 2008, with the full knowledge of Ministers Wilson and then Poots, up to half a million tons of potentially acid producing waste rock was removed from the mine without planning permission and used as building aggregate in the construction of the Aughnacloy bypass. Complaints from residents resulted in nothing but inaction from planning service which eventually led to a damning landmark Ombudsman's report which confirmed a catastrophic lack of planning enforcement at the goldmine, and led to a record compensation award of £30,000 to the residents concerned.

Unbelievably in 2012, apparently ignoring all that had gone before, Minister Attwood's department actually approved the removal of a further half million tons of the same potentially acid producing rock for use in the aggregates industry. This was quickly overturned at the Judicial Review Court when the Department unable to defend their actions, conceded lack of proper EIA screening. It is clear that until now environmental issues at the mine have been more or less ignored, so as a matter of urgency, I believe we should be moving the emphasis towards environmental prioritisation in planning and not development at any cost.

Bill Donnelly  
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