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*State Environmental Service of the Republic of Latvia*

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Rīgā

01.12.2025.

Our ref.Nr.2.28/AP/10699/2025

Ref. to: 01.10. 2025. No 6-3/25/4310

**The Ministry of Climate of the Republic of Estonia**

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**Regarding the municipal designated spatial plan and strategic environmental assessment for the Tõrva Municipality**

The State Environmental Service of the Republic of Latvia (hereinafter – the Service) would like to express gratitude to the Ministry of Climate of the Republic of Estonia for sending the results of the strategic environment impact assessment (hereinafter – the SEA) of the municipal designated spatial plan for the Tõrva Municipality (hereinafter – the Planning document).

On 15 October 2025 by letter No 2.28/AP/9233/2025 the Service confirmed the receipt of the Ministry of Climate of the Republic of Estonia 1 October 2025 letter No 6-3/25/4310 “Regarding the municipal designated spatial plan and strategic environmental assessment for the Tõrva Municipality”<sup>1</sup>. In view of the request for information in the letter on the necessity of the public hearing, considering opinions received from the Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia, the Valmiera Municipality and the Valka Municipality, the Service confirmed that a public hearing within public participation process would be necessary.

According to the national legislation and bilateral cooperation regarding public participation process, the term for the process of public participation in Latvia was determined from 21 October 2025 until 21 November 2025. Information regarding the EIA report of the Planning document and public participation options was published on the webpage<sup>2</sup> and the local newspapers “Auseklis” (the Edition of 21 October 2025) and “Ziemeļlatvija” (the Edition of 21 October 2025)

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<sup>1</sup> Received on 1 October 2025. Registration No 9464/AP/2025.

<sup>2</sup><https://www.eva.gov.lv/lv/jaunums/pazinojums-par-planosanas-dokumenta-tervas-torva-novada-teritorijas-planojums-izstradi-un-strategisko-ietekmes-uz-vidi-novertejumu-igaunija>

as well as sent to the various authorities considering the national procedure of the SEA in the transboundary context.

Please be informed that the Service received response from the Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia, the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Latvia, the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Latvia, the State Centre for Defence Logistics and Procurement, “Augstsprieguma tīkls” JSC (transmission system operator in the Republic of Latvia), the Nature Conservation Agency, the Valka Municipality and the Valmiera Municipality. The Service has not received comments from the public.

The Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia has evaluated the Planning document, the documentation of the Environmental report, including the Minutes of the public hearing, and kindly asks to supplement the Environmental report with the following information:

- assessment of the impacts of the proposed activity on the North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve,
- restoring the compensation mechanism for households in the territory of Latvia that are affected by the wind power turbines, considering the information expressed at the hearing (the compensation mechanism is provided for households on the Estonian side).

The Ministry of Health of the Republic of Latvia provided opinion that it can be concluded that the settlements located in the territory of Latvia are at least 1,2 km from the planned wind farm. Two former residential buildings, in emergency condition and uninhabited, are located in the containment zone (550 m and 770 m respectively) from the nearest wind turbine. In assessing noise and shading, including flashing, occupied residential buildings within a radius of 2 km from a wind farm in the territory of Latvia were taken into account - noise level exceedances are not planned, negative effects of low frequency noise, vibration and also electromagnetic fields are not planned. There may be a slight exceedance of the recommended shading level (8 h/a) in one inhabited area (“Gundegas”), but certain measures (e.g. installation of a smaller wind turbine) are envisaged to avoid the risk of flashing. Given that the implementation of the envisaged activity in Terva municipality of Estonia will not have an adverse transboundary impact on human health in the territory of Latvia, the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Latvia has no comments or a proposal for documentation submitted, including transboundary impact aspects.

The Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Latvia informed that it has no comments regarding the Environmental report.

“Augstsprieguma tīkls” JSC informed that the wind turbine locations indicated in the Planning document are situated at a distance more than the turbines’ maximum height (including rotor blade length) plus an additional 10 m from the existing 330 kV and 110 kV overhead transmission lines.

The State Centre for Defence Logistics and Procurement concluded that immovable property owned by the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Latvia was not in the immediate vicinity of the proposed activity of the Planning document and that the proposed activity could not affect the performance of the Centre’s activities and functions.

The Valka Municipality informed that it has acquainted with the Minutes of the public hearing, as well as the presentation and the video recording. The Valka Municipality informed that the municipality does not have any additions to the protocol, therefore there are no concrete proposals or comments on the Environmental report of the SEA of the Planning document and the aspects of the transboundary environmental impact assessment.

The Valmiera Municipality informed that it has no objections regarding the prepared Minutes of the hearing, as well as no specific proposals or objections regarding the Environmental report of

the SEA of the Planning document and aspects of the transboundary environmental impact assessment.

The Nature Conservation Agency (hereinafter – the Agency) noted that:

1. Upon reviewing the prepared translation, we found several significant inconsistencies. The translation mentions species that are not found in Latvia and Estonia. There are several instances in the text where the terminology, essence of the translation, and context do not correspond to the original document, which may affect the correct interpretation of the information.
2. No changes in the hydrological regime are expected that would affect EU-significant biotope and micro-reserve *Wet black alder forest biotope* (micro-reserve code: 1857) in Latvia.
3. The SEA indicates that ornithological surveys were conducted within a 500 m radius of the planned wind farm. Nature data system Ozols data was used and consultations were held with Gaidis Grandāns, a certified expert from the Agency. However, the Agency does not have access to Annex 5 – Bird survey drawings and background data on bird survey methodology (for internal use) to verify the consultations and studies carried out in Latvia and the potential impacts on bird species and their habitats.
4. Priority areas for the protection of the Eurasian pygmy owl (*Glaucidium passerinum*) and the Eurasian eagle-owl (*Bubo bubo*) have been designated in the Latvian border region, and the area is also suitable for other owl species. Owls and gallinaceous birds (Hazel grouse *Tetrastes bonasia*, *Capercaillie Tetrao urogallus*) are sensitive to noise pollution. In the opinion of the Agency, the SEA does not provide an assessment of the long-term impact on bird habitats, but only during the construction period.
5. The Agency informs that the University of Latvia, within the framework of the state research program, is modeling the habitats of protected species and preparing various materials to identify priority areas for biodiversity conservation. We encourage you to contact researchers at the University of Latvia and use the existing modeled data and information to assess the impact of the wind farm on bird habitats.
6. The SEA does not specify precise numerical indicators above which the impact on bats or bird fauna demise would be considered critical and additional mitigation measures would need to be implemented.
7. Bat monitoring has only been carried out in Estonia. There is no data on bat activity in Latvia.
8. The SEA does not evaluate the mutual impact with other wind farms. The cumulative impact will be assessed in later planning stages.
9. Considering the environmental impact assessment reports carried out in the North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve on the impact of the wind farm on birdlife and bats in the opinion of the Agency during the construction and operation of the planned wind farm the following additional conditions should be met:
  - i. Wind turbines should be equipped with aerodynamically improved blades (serrated trailing edges) or quieter wind turbine models to reduce the impact of noise pollution on noise-sensitive species such as gallinaceous birds and owls.
  - ii. Wind turbines should be equipped with SOD (shut-down-on-demand) systems to reduce the risk of bird mortality.

- iii. Environmental monitoring must be expanded with monitoring of all birds in order to assess the barrier effect and habitat loss/displacement caused by the wind farm – monitoring of dead specimens alone is not sufficient. In the opinion of the Agency, monitoring should be carried out before construction, during construction and during operation of the wind park to ensure the suitability and effectiveness of mitigation measures and, if necessary, to correct or expand the range of measures planned.
- iv. Precise numerical indicators must be established, above which the impact on bats or bird fauna is considered critical and additional mitigation measures must be implemented.
- v. In the opinion of the Agency, when starting the operation of the wind farm (as soon as the wind turbines start operating), restrictions on the operation of the wind turbines (wind speed, temperature and periods when bat activity is high and there is a risk of mortality) should be established to ensure the protection of bats. This is particularly important for wind turbines located near bat colonies, feeding areas and migration routes.
- vi. The Agency would also like to see the future results of research and monitoring on the impact and cumulative risks of the planned wind farm.

The Service kindly asks to consider the above-mentioned opinions and comments in the Environmental report of the Planning document.

Enclosure: 8 documents (files: *Ministry of Smart Administration Regional Development\_Torva.pdf*, *Ministry of Health\_Torva.pdf*, *Augstspriegumu tikls\_Torva.pdf*, *Valka Municipality\_Torva.pdf*, *Nature Conservation Agency\_Torva.pdf*, *Valmiera Municipality\_Torva.pdf*, *Ministry of Interior\_Torva.pdf*, *VAMOIC\_Torva*).

Sincerely yours,

Director of Permitting Board

D. Kaleja

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CONTAINS TIME- STAMP

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