

# Submission to An Coimisiún Pleanála

Re: Proposed Laurclavagh Renewable Energy Development (Case Ref: PA07.319307)

08 JAN 2026

LTR DATED \_\_\_\_\_ FROM \_\_\_\_\_

LDG-  
ACP-

## 1. Introduction & Principal Concerns

We, the undersigned residents, wish to formally object to the proposed Laurclavagh Wind Farm.

- While we fully support renewable energy and climate action, we believe this project is inappropriately located and disproportionately scaled for our community and landscape. Our main concerns include:

Noise, sleep disruption, and potential health implications.

Loss of residential amenity through visual intrusion, shadow flicker, and constant turbine movement.

Risks to groundwater, private wells, and group water schemes.

Negative impacts on wildlife, including birds, bats, and sensitive habitats.

Significant harm to the heritage, scenic character, and tourism appeal of Knockma Hill (Cnoc Meadha) and its wider setting.

We respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse permission to protect our homes, water, heritage, and local tourism.

## 2. Description of the Proposal & Local Context

The application seeks approval for eight industrial-scale wind turbines, each approximately 185 metres to blade tip, along with associated roads, foundations, a substation, and a 110 kV grid connection.

- The site is located in a settled rural area characterised by:

Numerous homes.

Active farms and small businesses.

Private wells and group water schemes.

A strong sense of community.

- The surrounding landscape includes:

Knockma Hill (Cnoc Meadha) – a major cultural, archaeological, and recreational landmark.

Turloughs, lakes, and karst groundwater systems.

Scenic views towards Lough Corrib, Connemara, and Croagh Patrick.

This is not an isolated upland, but a lived-in, historically rich, and environmentally sensitive area.

### 3. Noise, Health & Residential Amenity

- We are deeply concerned about the long-term noise and health implications of placing very large turbines close to homes. Key issues include:

Outdated standards – The noise assessment relies on older guidance and does not clearly demonstrate compliance with WHO 2018 Environmental Noise Guidelines or current HSE thinking.

Quiet rural baseline – Night-time background noise levels are extremely low. Even moderate turbine noise will be highly noticeable and likely to disturb sleep.

Health impacts not fully addressed – The documentation fails to assess chronic sleep disturbance, mental health, stress, and vulnerable groups. No comprehensive Health Impact Assessment has been carried out.

### 4. Shadow Flicker & Visual Intrusion at Homes

We are also concerned about shadow flicker and visual dominance at our homes.

Shadow flicker – Current guidelines permit up to 30 hours per year and 30 minutes per day at any dwelling. Draft revised guidelines aim for zero shadow flicker at existing homes.

Overbearing visual presence – At 185 metres, each turbine is roughly the height of a 60-storey building. From many homes, turbines will be prominent and moving, transforming rural views into industrial ones.

## 5. Knockma Hill – Heritage, Landscape & Tourism

Knockma is central to why this location is unsuitable.

Heritage significance – Knockma Hill is a distinctive landmark with prehistoric cairns, ringforts, and links to early Christian heritage.

Landscape and tourism value – Knockma is a popular walking and family amenity, widely promoted as a fairy hill with panoramic views over Lough Corrib, Connemara, and Croagh Patrick.

Visual impact – Proposed turbines will exceed the height of the hill itself, breaking the skyline and dominating views, eroding the wild and historic character of the panorama.

## 6. Water, Groundwater & Flood Risk

- Many residents rely on private wells and group water schemes. The site lies in a karst limestone environment, which poses particular risks:

Groundwater vulnerability – Karst aquifers transmit water and pollutants rapidly. Large excavations can disrupt flows, and spills could migrate quickly.

Drinking water security – Contamination could render water undrinkable and impose heavy remediation costs.

Flooding – Additional hard surfaces and altered drainage patterns risk increasing runoff and worsening flood risk.

## 7. Ecology – Birds, Bats & Habitats

- Available information suggests ecological impacts have not been fully ruled out:

Birds – Sensitive species sightings noted. Under European law, where reasonable doubt exists, permission should not be granted.

Bats – Woodland edges and hedgerows provide bat habitat. Bats are highly vulnerable to collision and barotrauma.

Habitats – Nearby turloughs and wetlands add sensitivity. Construction and hydrological changes risk fragmentation and disturbance.

## 8. Planning Policy, Precedent & Tourism Economy

- The proposal conflicts with key planning policies:

Galway County Development Plan seeks to protect scenic views and heritage landscapes.

Draft revised wind energy guidelines move towards lower noise limits, elimination of shadow flicker, and greater protection for sensitive landscapes.

Tourism research shows that landscape and scenery are central to Ireland's tourism offering, and visitors are less accepting of wind farms in areas of high scenic or heritage value.

## 9. Conclusion – Our Respectful Request

In summary, we believe the Laurclavagh Wind Farm is too large and too close to homes, too risky for groundwater, too uncertain for wildlife, and too damaging to Knockma's heritage and tourism value.

We respectfully and firmly request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse permission for the Laurclavagh Renewable Energy Development to protect our homes, health, water, wildlife, and the unique landscape of Knockma for present and future generations.

Signed: *Kevin Hovelt*

Print: *KEVIN HOVELT*

Date: *05th Jan 2026*