

Observation on Case 320916 / PL07.320916
Coolpowra BESS / Battery Energy Storage System Project
Coolpowra, Cooldorragha, Gortlusky, Ballynaheskeragh and Sheeaunrush, Co. Galway

To: An Coimisiún Pleanála
Re: Coolpowra BESS / Battery Energy Storage System Project, Case 320916 / PL07.320916
From: Brendan Flynn
Address for correspondence: Gortrea, Portumna, Co. Galway, H53 DP44
Date: 14 June 2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to make this observation in respect of the proposed Coolpowra BESS / Battery Energy Storage System project, case reference 320916 / PL07.320916.

I request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse permission for this development and uphold the refusal of Galway County Council.

I am not objecting to battery storage or energy infrastructure in principle. I am objecting to the siting, scale, assessment and cumulative impact of this particular development in this particular rural location.

In my view, the BESS project should not be assessed in isolation. It is functionally linked to the wider Coolpowra energy complex, including the Gas Plant application 320095 and the GIS Substation application 320094. The environmental, traffic, drainage, visual, safety, construction, firewater, emergency response and community impacts should be assessed cumulatively and in combination with the wider development.

Inappropriate rural location

This is a major energy infrastructure development proposed for a rural countryside location. The scale of the proposed battery storage facility, associated electrical infrastructure, access works, drainage works, fire safety requirements and related development is not compatible with the character of the surrounding rural area.

If this infrastructure is required, the applicant should clearly demonstrate why this rural location is necessary and appropriate, and why alternative industrial, brownfield, port, dock, or existing energy infrastructure locations were not chosen.

Project splitting and cumulative impact

I am concerned that the full environmental impact of the overall Coolpowra energy complex has not been assessed as one connected project.

The BESS project, Gas Plant, GIS Substation, gas pipeline, Oldstreet works, access works, drainage works and road changes are functionally related. Their impacts should be assessed cumulatively and in combination, not divided across separate applications or deferred to later stages.

Roads, access and traffic safety

I am concerned that the proposed development would contribute to unacceptable traffic and road safety impacts on the N65, L8763 and surrounding rural roads.

The wider Coolpowra development would involve construction traffic, abnormal loads, HGV movements and operational traffic on roads that have not been shown to be suitable for this scale of energy infrastructure. The Commission should examine whether the road network can safely accommodate the combined traffic impact of the BESS project, Gas Plant, GIS Substation and associated works.

Fire safety, battery risk and emergency response

Battery energy storage brings specific fire safety, thermal runaway, contaminated firewater and emergency response questions. These matters should not be treated as secondary or deferred matters. The Commission should be satisfied at this stage that fire risk, firewater containment, emergency access, incident response, groundwater protection and impacts on nearby residents and watercourses have been quantitatively and transparently assessed.

Water, SAC/SPA and Appropriate Assessment

I am concerned about hydrological connections between the site and protected European sites, including the Shannon and Lough Derg catchments.

The Commission must be satisfied that this development, alone and in combination with related infrastructure, will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site. This must be demonstrated beyond reasonable scientific doubt.

The assessment should include drainage, construction disturbance, road works, battery firewater runoff, contaminated runoff risks, and cumulative in-combination effects with the Gas Plant, GIS Substation, gas pipeline and Oldstreet works.

Failure to properly assess alternatives

The applicant has not, in my view, demonstrated that reasonable alternatives have been properly assessed.

The question is not simply whether the site can technically support energy infrastructure. The question is whether it is the most appropriate location when planning, road safety, environmental, visual, drainage, fire safety, emergency response and community impacts are properly weighed.

Lack of meaningful public consultation

For a development of this scale and sensitivity, the public consultation process has not, in my view, been sufficient.

Local residents should not have to rely on fragmented documents, late-stage additional information, or community groups to understand the real implications of the wider Coolpowra energy complex. The applicant should be required to provide clear, accessible, localised information on traffic, fire safety, emergency response, visual impact, water, cumulative impact and monitoring.

If the Commission is minded to grant permission

If An Coimisiún Pleanála is minded to grant permission, I request that strict enforceable conditions be attached, including:

- a full cumulative assessment of all linked infrastructure;
- an independent road safety audit;
- strict construction traffic restrictions;
- an abnormal load management plan;
- quantitative battery fire and thermal runaway risk assessment;
- firewater and contaminated runoff containment measures;
- independent emergency-response review;
- drainage and water protection measures;
- noise limits and monitoring at nearby homes;
- public reporting of monitoring data;
- a community liaison process;
- a clear complaints process with response timelines;
- enforcement measures if limits are exceeded.

Conclusion

For the reasons set out above, I respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse permission for the proposed Coolpowra BESS / Battery Energy Storage System project and uphold the refusal of Galway County Council.

The development has not, in my view, been justified in this rural location. The applicant has not adequately demonstrated that the site is suitable, that alternatives have been properly assessed, that roads and access are safe, that cumulative effects have been assessed, or that risks to residents, water, protected sites and the wider environment have been addressed to the standard required.

Yours faithfully,

Brendan Flynn

