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The Association of Irish Racecourses

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Chief Executive: Paul Hensey.

To:

An Coimisiún Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
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Our reference no: 25-99DVL01

RE: Proposed Windfarm development of 7 Turbines, 110kV substation and associated works within the townlands of Leitrim, Lumville, Ballinla, Clarkeville, Ballyfore Big, Ballyfore Little, Ballyeakin and Ballykilleen, in (Coolestown By) Co. Offaly

An Coimisiún Pleanála - Case reference: PAX19.323579

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Association of Irish Racecourses (AIR) is the representative body for the 26 racecourses operating across the island of Ireland. We write to express our strong concern regarding the proposed Ballinla Wind Farm development and its potential implications for the wider horse racing and breeding industries — sectors which are of exceptional cultural, economic, and social importance to rural Ireland.

Horseracing in Ireland is not only a deeply rooted part of our national heritage and rural identity, but it is also an area in which this country excels on the global stage. The industry employs over 30,000 people, both directly and indirectly, and attracts more than 1.25 million attendees to racecourses annually. These events and venues provide a vital platform to showcase the success of Irish-bred horses, trainers, jockeys, and stable staff, reinforcing Ireland's international reputation for excellence in equine sports and breeding.

The continued viability of racecourses and the wider equine sector is intrinsically dependent on the health, wellbeing, and performance of horses. Any development that has the potential to affect animal welfare, breeding outcomes, or the environmental stability of equine lands must therefore be approached with utmost caution.

The proposed Ballinla Wind Farm lies in an area associated with pedigree and performance breeding, where horses of significant value are reared and trained. Internationally, concerns have been raised about the potential impacts of wind turbine noise, low-frequency vibration, and flicker on animal behaviour and stress levels. Given Ireland's position as a world leader in thoroughbred production, such risks merit strong consideration to refusal of this proposed development.

We also wish to highlight the current decline in Ireland's foal crop, a matter of growing concern across the industry. Protecting the breeding environment, herd health, and genetic potential of the Irish thoroughbred is critical to ensuring the long-term sustainability of this sector. Any disruption to animal health or behaviour arising from industrial-scale wind energy developments in key breeding regions could have a serious knock-on effect on the entire horse racing and bloodstock ecosystem.

In light of these factors, the Association of Irish Racecourses respectfully requests that the planning authority give full and careful consideration to the potential implications of the Ballinla Wind Farm for Ireland's equine industry.

We believe that safeguarding the welfare of horses, the integrity of rural landscapes, and the sustainability of Ireland's global reputation in horseracing should be a primary consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Sent by Email and therefore bears no signature.

Conor O'Neill
Chairman
Association of Irish Racecourses (AIR)