

**Subject: Objection to the Proposed Shanclon Windfarm (323699)**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to lodge a formal objection to the proposed Shanclon Windfarm (ABP Ref. 323699). I am a lifelong resident of Kilconly and have served for many years as Chairman of the Kilconly Development Committee. I have also been the organiser of the Wild West Music Fest, a major community event that has taken place annually in Kilconly since 2017.

**1. Community and Economic Impact**

The Wild West Music Fest has become one of the largest Country Music events in Ireland, attracting thousands of visitors over two weekends each May. The event involves more than 200 local volunteers, and all proceeds are reinvested directly into the parish, supporting our schools, churches, and community groups.

Planning for the festival begins a year in advance, and by early April, preparations are already in full swing — with deliveries, equipment, and volunteers working throughout the parish. The roads in and around Kilconly are particularly busy during this period.

The windfarm proposal raises serious concerns regarding traffic disruption, road safety, and accessibility during this critical time. Construction traffic associated with the development could significantly impact the safe and efficient operation of this event, which is a major source of local economic activity and community cohesion.

**2. Lack of Public Consultation**

I also wish to highlight the lack of genuine community engagement prior to the submission of this application. Despite the scale and long-term impact of the proposed development, no public meeting was held in Kilconly or in any of the neighbouring parishes, and no effort was made to inform or consult the wider community.

As someone who works professionally as a Communications Manager for a company that delivers major infrastructure projects on behalf of Irish Water, I am acutely aware of the importance of proper public consultation. It is standard practice on such projects to hold public information meetings, to ensure that local people can raise concerns and receive accurate information in person.

In this case, I personally offered the use of Kilconly Community Centre to RWE as a venue for a public meeting — a facility ideally suited for such an event and used regularly for large gatherings — but they never took me up on the offer.

The absence of proper consultation has created considerable mistrust and frustration within the community and undermines the legitimacy of the proposal from a planning and procedural perspective.

### **3. Impact on Cloonbar Bog and the Natural Environment**

Of particular concern are the proposed works on Cloonbar Bog, which forms part of the local landscape and is of high ecological and recreational value. Our community is currently working to conserve and enhance this bog as a site for research, education, and low-impact recreation such as walking, cycling, and birdwatching.

Cloonbar Bog is also a significant carbon store, and disturbing it through excavation, drainage, and the pouring of concrete foundations would undermine its natural carbon sequestration capacity — directly contradicting national climate objectives and the Galway County Development Plan, which seeks to *“protect and enhance the County’s peatlands, recognising their role in biodiversity, carbon storage, and flood mitigation.”*

Such disturbance could also negatively affect local hydrology and wildlife, including species protected under the EU Habitats and Birds Directives.

### **4. Cultural and Tourism Value of Kilconly**

Kilconly is a vibrant, close-knit, and forward-looking rural community. Our Community Centre, which is equipped with acoustic curtains and professional facilities, is regularly used for concerts and events — including performances by The Saw Doctors, who publicly described Kilconly as an *“idyllic village”* on national television.

The vitality of Kilconly’s community life, and its growing reputation as a rural cultural hub, contribute significantly to rural tourism and local economic resilience. Introducing a large-scale industrial wind development in close proximity would be incompatible with the character, tranquillity, and tourism potential of the area.

### **5. Commitment to Sustainable Energy and Responsible Development**

As a community, we in Kilconly are strong supporters of sustainability and renewable energy. The Development Committee is actively exploring local initiatives to improve energy efficiency, support biodiversity, and promote environmental awareness. However, we believe that renewable energy must be pursued in a way that is community-led, environmentally responsible, and sensitive to local context.

Large-scale developments imposed without proper consultation or consideration for their local impact do not reflect these principles and risk eroding community trust in the wider renewable energy agenda.

### **6. Conclusion**

Kilconly is a community that fully supports sustainable development and the transition to renewable energy, but such progress must be achieved in a manner that respects the environment, the landscape, and the people who live here.

This proposal, as it stands, would have a disproportionate and negative impact on our local environment, community, and economy. It fails to comply with key objectives of the Galway

County Development Plan regarding community consultation, peatland protection, and the safeguarding of tourism and rural amenity.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse permission for the Shancloon Windfarm.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Devaney

Lissaleen Tuam Co Galway H54CK71