

# OBSERVATION/SUBMISSION TO PLANNING APPLICATION

Case Reference: 323761

Joe Meehan

Ballinastack

Moylough

Galway

To: An Coimisiún Pleanála

64 Marlborough Street

Dublin 1

D01 V902

Date: 07 November 2025

**Re: Observation/Submission to proposed wind energy development at Cooloo Wind Farm**

Location: Cloondahamper, Cloonascragh, Elmhill, Cooloo, Lecarrow, Dangan Eighter, Lissavally, Slievegorm  
- Co. Galway

Applicant: Neoen Renewables Ireland Limited

Dear Sir/Madam,

I have been living in the Ballinastack area all my life and my home will be approximately 2.5 km away from the nearest proposed turbine. I am concerned about the lack of community consultation there has been on this project. I also feel this development should not go ahead until draft regulations are finalised. I also own land which is also around 2.5 km away from the development and I am concerned that future regulation will impact on my ability to build on this land.

I strongly urge the board to reject this proposed development for these reasons and the reasons listed below.

## **Community Consultation and Engagement**

The basis that the consultation was undertaken by Neoen and MKO for the Cooloo Wind Farm has failed to meet the basic expectations of transparent and inclusive community engagement. It falls short of national guidelines and the intent of An Bord Pleanála's Strategic Infrastructure Development process.

Statutory notices were published in the Irish Examiner instead of the Tuam Herald, which most local households rely on for news.

Despite claims of consultation with local groups, key organisations such as Killarney Community Council and Killarney GAA, were not engaged in any meaningful way.

No public event was held in Moylough, even though seven of nine turbines are proposed there, excluding many directly affected residents.

The developer's report cites "door-to-door engagement" with only 55 homes and ten written responses is evidence of a process that reached few and failed to inform many.

The developer's continued reliance on online materials to provide information disadvantaged rural residents with poor internet access and a large number of older residents without a technical knowledge.

These shortcomings show that the consultation was administrative rather than genuine, and did not provide the community with a fair chance to participate. An Bord Pleanála should recognise these significant deficiencies when assessing the project's compliance with public engagement standards.

### **Planning Framework and Guidelines**

The continued reliance on the Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006 is no longer appropriate or proportionate given the significant evolution of wind energy technology and the clear advancements in scientific understanding since their publication nearly two decades ago. The 2006 Guidelines were developed in an era when turbines were typically less than 100 metres in height and generated 1–2 MW of power. The turbines in this proposed development will be 180 metres and produce approximately 6 MW of power. This will result in greater visual, acoustic, and environmental impacts than those contemplated in 2006.

The fact that the Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006 has been acknowledged in the Dáil many times by many different people. In 2013 Deputy Michéal Martin told, the then Taoiseach, Enda Kenny that the guidelines were outdated and were never framed in the context of the new technology. Yet in 2025 Tánaiste Simon Harris is still saying in the Dáil that he acknowledges that the guidelines are outdated and that there is a specific commitment from the Government to prioritise the publication of new guidelines.

It is therefore unreasonable and contrary to the principles of proper planning and sustainable development for An Coimisiún Pleanála to continue to rely solely on the 2006 Guidelines. An Coimisiún Pleanála must make sure that any decision made is not based on outdated standards.

### **Lack of detailed traffic management plan**

This submission objects to the proposed development due to insufficient traffic management and risk assessment in Appendix 15-2 (Traffic Management Plan). The plan omits essential quantitative data—such as expected abnormal load numbers, peak-phase traffic volumes, and route-specific scheduling—required to evaluate construction impacts. Narrow rural roads near Barnaderg and Cooloo lack the capacity for large turbine transport without pre-works strengthening or verge reinforcement. No detailed programme for road condition monitoring or reinstatement is provided. The TMP also fails to model cumulative or worst-case haulage scenarios, nor does it include enforceable mitigation measures for school transport, farm access or local business continuity. In the absence of these specifics, the project's potential impacts on road safety, infrastructure integrity and rural amenity remain unacceptably high. The application states that locals will be kept informed about traffic construction. Judging by how poorly locals were informed about the windfarm initially, I would be very sceptical as to whether we would be kept informed once construction was to commence. The Board should refuse permission or impose strict, verifiable traffic and haulage conditions.

### **Conclusion**

In light of the serious concerns outlined above I urge An Coimisiún Pleanála to refuse permission for this development. The proposal is not compatible with the principles of proper planning or sustainable

development and would have lasting negative effects on local residents, farmers, and the wider community. I have no doubt that if this development is allowed to go ahead it will result in nuisance actions being brought, and ultimately a permanent injunction to shut down the windfarm. I therefore strongly object to this proposal and I feel that given all of the facts An Coimisiún Pleanála has no choice but to refuse the planning permission.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joe Meehan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "M".

Name: Joe Meehan

Date: 07 November 2025