

**Michelle Stone**

Peak, Barnaderg, Tuam, Co. Galway

**Date:** 15 November 2025

**To:** An Coimisiún Pleanála

**Re:** Case 323761 / PAX07.323761 – Proposed Wind Energy Development at Cloondahamper, Cloonascragh, Elmhill, Cooloo, Lecarrow, Dangan Eighter, Lissavally and Slievegorm, Co. Galway

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Dear Sir/Madam,

I, Michelle Stone, residing at Peak, Barnaderg, Tuam, Co. Galway, located approximately 1.23 km from Lissavally, wish to lodge this formal objection to the proposed wind farm under Case Reference 323761 / PAX07.323761. This submission represents both a personal objection and a call for a more balanced, modern and community-conscious approach to renewable energy development in County Galway.

### **1) Landscape & Visual Impact**

The proposed turbines, each up to 185 m high, would dominate the rural landscape, radically altering views from the surrounding area including Lissavally, Barnaderg and Tuam. This excessive scale is out of character with the existing rural setting and conflicts with the objectives of the Galway County Development Plan, which seeks to protect areas of high landscape sensitivity. Photomontages provided by the applicant demonstrate clear visual intrusion across multiple vantage points, undermining scenic and residential amenity.

### **2) Residential Amenity, Health & Well-being**

At just 1.23 km from my home, the impact of turbine noise, shadow flicker and visual disturbance would be unavoidable. The Environmental Impact Assessment appears to underestimate cumulative noise levels and does not reflect real-life conditions experienced by residents living near comparable developments. International studies highlight long-term effects on mental health, sleep, and quality of life from turbines of this magnitude.

Given the proximity and the extraordinary scale of the proposed turbines, I believe the shadow flicker standards outlined in the Wind Energy Development Guidelines (2006) issued by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage are no longer adequate to protect residential amenity or public health. The proposed turbines represent a dramatic escalation in size compared to those contemplated in 2006:

- Tip Height: 180 meters
- Rotor Diameter: 162 meters
- Hub Height: 105 meters
- Swept Area: Over 20,000 m<sup>2</sup> per turbine

These dimensions significantly increase the area affected by moving shadows, extending the reach and intensity of shadow flicker events. The 2006 Guidelines do not account for turbines of this magnitude, nor the cumulative impact of multiple units in close proximity to residential receptors. The Guidelines permit up to 30 hours of shadow flicker per year at any dwelling. This threshold is unsupported by contemporary health research. It is uniformly applied without regard to turbine scale or proximity and doesn't consider cumulative exposure from multiple turbines. No scientific basis is provided for the 30-hour limit, and no differentiation is made between single-turbine exposure and multi-directional flicker from clustered arrays.

### **3) Right to Peaceful Enjoyment of Property**

Article 1, Protocol 1 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) safeguards every individual's right to the peaceful enjoyment of their possessions. It provides that: "Every natural or legal person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions. No one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest and subject to the conditions provided for by law and by the general principles of international law." Approval of this proposed wind farm would constitute a clear interference with this right. If the development proceeds, I will be deprived of the peaceful enjoyment of my home. The construction and operation phases would bring significant and continuous disturbance including persistent noise pollution, low-frequency noise (LFN), shadow flicker, and heavy vehicle movements. The tranquillity and visual amenity of my surroundings, which form an intrinsic part of my home environment and well-being, would be irreversibly diminished. During construction, the constant flow of heavy machinery and associated noise would cause ongoing disruption and stress, further impacting daily life. Once operational, the presence of industrial-scale turbines dominating the landscape would permanently alter the character of the area, stripping residents of the quiet enjoyment of their homes and lands. This level of intrusion cannot be considered proportionate or justified in the public interest, and therefore conflicts with the protections afforded under Article 1, Protocol 1 of the ECHR.

### **4) Galway County Development Plan Conflict**

The Galway County Development Plan 2015–2021 and its Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy (LARES) identify zones where wind energy is considered Strategic, Open to Consideration, or Not Normally Permissible. The proposed site lies outside of designated Strategic Areas. Therefore, it conflicts with Policy ER2, which requires renewable energy projects to be appropriately scaled and compatible with the local environment. Moreover, the current Plan has expired and is under review for the 2022–2028 period, highlighting that its framework does not reflect the massive increase in turbine size and associated impacts now proposed.

### **5) Road Disruption**

I wish to object to the proposed development on the grounds of significant traffic and road safety impacts during construction, particularly in relation to abnormal load deliveries. The Traffic Management Plan (Appendix 15-2) lacks essential detail, including the number, timing and routing of heavy goods and turbine loads, and commitments to off-peak scheduling. Without clear and enforceable mitigation, there is a risk of damage to narrow rural roads, verges and drainage, along with conflicts between construction vehicles, farm traffic and school transport. No robust plan has been presented for road strengthening, maintenance or reinstatement. The absence of detailed community-specific measures leaves local access, amenity and safety inadequately protected.

Furthermore, having roads closed for a combined minimum 210 days is unacceptable. It is also unacceptable for locals to have diversions of up to 13.7km per journey for the duration of this project. The application states that locals will be kept informed about traffic construction. Judging by how poorly locals were informed about the windfarm initially, I find it hard to believe that we would be kept informed once construction was to commence. The Board should refuse permission or impose strict, verifiable traffic and haulage conditions.

### **6) Ecology, Biodiversity & Peatland Impact**

The area contains sensitive peat soils and habitats that play a vital role in carbon storage and biodiversity. Construction and heavy infrastructure may release stored carbon and disrupt hydrology. The Environmental Impact Assessment fails to adequately consider peat stability, bird migration, or bat activity. The environmental cost may well exceed the stated benefits.

### **7) Water Quality and Local Water Supply**

I wish to further highlight that my family and I are members of the local Barnaderg-Gortbeg Group water scheme serving our area. The proposed construction and operation of the wind farm could have serious implications for water quality, including potential contamination of local groundwater and surface water sources due to excavation, peat

disturbance, and heavy construction traffic. The Environmental Impact Assessment does not adequately assess or mitigate the risk to the local water supply, which is of vital importance to the health and welfare of our community. Any degradation of water quality would have immediate and long-term consequences for residents dependent on the group water scheme. This alone represents a significant reason to refuse the proposed development.

### **8) Community and Economic Concerns**

The community faces long-term visual and psychological intrusion, increased traffic, and decreased property values. It is fair to say that people will not want to live near an industrial wind farm. There is growing evidence of loss of value and depreciation in the marketability of houses located near wind farms. The knock-on effect is that people will not move to the area. Our local schools, local businesses and the community will suffer. Rural Ireland still has a strong thriving support network of neighbours and communities which will fundamentally be put at risk by imposing an industrial wind farm in the midst of 400 homes. While renewable energy is vital, community wellbeing must not be sacrificed for industrial-scale projects that deliver limited local benefit. Meaningful community consultation and benefit-sharing are minimal or absent in this proposal. Renewable energy policy should promote distributed, community-scale developments, not overwhelming, landscape-dominating installations.

### **Conclusion and Request**

Given the cumulative environmental, social, and policy conflicts outlined above, I respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse permission for this proposal. The proposal is not compatible with the principles of proper planning or sustainable development. I would hope that renewable energy in County Galway develops in a more responsible, modern, and people-centred manner than what has been proposed.

I therefore strongly object to this proposal and ask that it be refused in full.

Yours faithfully,

**Michelle Stone**