

Paul And Suzanne Connell

Tygreenane

Barnaderg,

Tuam

Co Galway

H54H210

20/11/2025

To : An Coimisiún Pleanála

64 Marlborough Street

Dublin 1

D01 V902

Re: Observation / Objection to Cooloo Wind Farm – Strategic Infrastructure Development

Case reference: PAX07.323761

Applicant: Neoen Renewables Ireland Ltd.

Location: Townlands of Cloondahamper (Blake), Cloonascragh, Elmhill, Cooloo, Lecarrow, Dangan Eigher, Lissavally & Slievegorm, Co. Galway

Dear Sir / Madam,

We, **Paul and Suzanne Connell, of Tygreenane, Barnaderg, Tuam, Co. Galway, H54 H20** hereby make this formal submission in respect of the proposed Cooloo Wind Farm Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID).

Our home and working farm are located immediately West of the Turbines and north west of the on-site 110 kV substation and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) as shown on the planning site layout drawings and grid connection drawings. [An Bord Pleanála+1](#) We are therefore directly and severely affected by the proposed development in terms of **noise, visual impact, shadow flicker, traffic, safety, hydrology and impacts on our farming operations and residential amenity**. The nearest turbine, T6 is 1.35 km from my house.

For the reasons set out below we **strongly object** to the proposed development and respectfully request that **An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse permission**.

Introduction

I have been born and raised in Tygreenane. I lived away while in college and perusing my career. However, I moved back Tygreenane in 2019 after living away for many years. I built a house on my parent's land after taking over the family farm. I married my wife Suzanne and have 3 children, Dáire, Iarlaith and Meadhbh.

I want to strongly state that I am not against the green policies being pursued by our government. I strongly support pro-green policies and do believe we need to do everything to help preserve our planet for future generations.

However, having done my research, I strongly believe building a windfarm of the size proposed in Barnaderg/Cooloo is totally of proportion to the local area. It is situated too close to people's dwellings. I want to strongly object to the windfarm on the following grounds which I will outline in greater detail in the rest of my submission.

1. **Noise** - My wife suffers from severe migraine and we are afraid the turbines will aggravate her condition. The impact of the noise created by the turbines and its accocitated wake are a huge concern for us, especially when we have an easterly wind. We would be right in the path of the sound during these times. We live 1.34km West of Turbine 6.
2. **Property Values** - Having built a house a great expense, and having a huge mortgage, it is totally unjust if our priorities lose a large proportion of their value and I will outline below.
3. **Water contamination** – My later father Tom Connell was involved in the setting up of the Barnaderg/Gortbeg group water scheme. It is unbelievable that a windfarm could be built on the catchment area of our water and indeed the water for over 10,000 people in co Galway. To put this water source at risk is totally disproportionate to the potential benefits of the windfarm.
4. **Local Schools** - My children attend the local school, Barnaderg NS, and the local preschool. We are fearful of the impact this windfarm will have on the children attending the school.
5. **Environmental impact.** Having grown up in the aera, I spent my childhood playing and working in the bogs that will be affected by this proposed wind turbine. We spent summers saving turf as children. Turf harvesting is being phased out and I would totally support this. It has a massive effect on our bog ecology. So, in the same vain, I cannot understand why so much of our local bog will be destroyed to build these turbines. It also amazes me how little effort was made by the windfarm company to properly survey and create a complete comprehensive Environmental audit of the impact of the turbines during and after construction.
6. **Community consultation** – This is a vital part of any project of this size. I am appalled at the lack of community engagement. I received no communication prior to the first and only clinic held by the developer. I should have receive notification due to my proximity to the windfarm. I was also a member of various local group and club executive committees, including the Killrerin GAA club and I can categorically state that no communication was received regarding the windfarm while I was a member of these committees.

Noise

Planning permission for the proposed Cooloo Wind Farm should be refused on the basis that it poses a clear and foreseeable risk of substantial interference with the normal use and enjoyment of nearby homes. In *Byrne & Moorhead v ABO Energy* [2025] IEHC 330, the Irish High Court found that wind turbine noise—specifically low-frequency and amplitude-modulated sound—constituted a private nuisance under common law, as it significantly disrupted residents’ ordinary domestic life. The Court held that such noise amounted to an unreasonable and continuous intrusion, preventing the quiet occupation of the home and resulting in the permanent shutdown of three turbines in County Wexford.

The Cooloo proposal relies on outdated ETSU-based noise criteria that fail to account for the same low-frequency and modulated noise effects found to cause substantial nuisance in the Wexford case. Given the proposed turbines’ greater height and rotor size, the likelihood of these harmful acoustic effects occurring at Cooloo is even higher. Approving this development under obsolete standards would disregard the High Court’s findings and expose local residents to predictable and legally recognized interference with their right to the peaceful enjoyment of their homes. Planning permission should therefore be refused in full on these grounds.

Property Devaluation

The 2023 CERIS (Centre for Economic Research on Inclusivity and Sustainability) paper – ‘Wind Turbines and House Prices Along the West of Ireland: A Hedonic Pricing Approach’ – surveyed the prices of houses located near windfarms in seven counties.

The paper states that: *‘The analysis finds a robust and significant reduction in property value of -14.7% within 1km of a turbine’ and that ‘Back-of-the-envelope calculations suggest that the total loss in value for houses within 1km of a turbine in the case counties is approximately €6.8 million.’*

Galway County Council is an agent for the state of the Republic of Ireland and as such is responsible to uphold **Article 40 of the Irish Constitution which states – ‘the state shall in particular by its laws protect as best it may from unjust attack and in the case of injustice done vindicate the life, person, good name, and property rights of every citizen.’**

I am aware that the Barnaderg Cooloo Wind Farm Action Collective have spoken to a local auctioneer, who said that he had trouble selling a house in County Mayo because it was close to several wind turbines. The auctioneer was able to site a specific instance whereby a married couple looked at the house and decided not to buy it. The auctioneer said that the presence of the wind turbines was a crucial factor in the couple’s decision not to buy the house. The owners of this house ended up selling for less money than the couple had been initially willing to pay for the house.

Water

Barnaderg Gortbeg Group Water Scheme

I use the water from Barnaderg Gortbeg Group Water Scheme as my main source of drinking water for my household. The water is of excellent quality and I am very concerned that pollution of various types such as silt, sediment and other contaminants will enter the water source, causing me and my family harm. With the location of two Turbines within the Source Protection Area (SPA) I believe the Cooloo Windfarm should not be granted permission whatsoever, especially in such a highly karstified and hydrologically sensitive area.

Primary and Pre Schools

The presence of wind turbines near schools can have a range of impacts on students, staff, and the overall learning environment. Wind turbines produce both audible noise and low-frequency infrasound, which can be noticeable inside buildings, which can cause a distraction. This constant distraction will interfere with children's attention and overall cognitive performance, making it more difficult for students to focus on learning.

- Cooloo NS is 1.59km away from the nearest wind turbine.
- Brierfield NS is 1.35 km away from the nearest wind turbine.
- Barnaderg NS is located approximately 2.49 km from the nearest wind turbine.

Shadow flicker caused by rotating turbine blades can create intermittent light in classrooms, which can be distracting and, in some cases, uncomfortable or stressful for children. The noise and shadow flicker will also greatly impact on the children in the school who have an additional need. There is a lack of research to state the impact on these children.

In addition to the above, during the construction phase and while laying the cabling, the roads will experience increased traffic and road closures. This will impact children travelling to and from school. While the severity of these impacts depends on distance from the turbines, it is clear that wind turbines in close proximity to schools have the potential to disrupt learning, reduce student wellbeing, and interfere with the overall educational experience.

Barnaderg National School

Barnaderg National School is located approximately 2.49 km from Turbine No 1.

The turbines being this close to the school will no doubt have an impact on the education of the children in Barnaderg NS. The school will suffer from noise pollution and infrasound. In addition to this, during the construction phase and while laying cabling the roads to and from the school will be impacted by road closures, traffic, additional noise and dust. Again, all of this will impact on the children of the school.

I am also concerned that if t planning permission is granted less people will be moving to or building in the area of Barnaderg. This will lead to fewer children in the community and may lead to the school losing teachers, and ultimately the school closure.

Shadow Flicker

Chapter 5 of the EIAR ('Population and Human Health') states that the nearest residential property is 720 metres away from the closest wind turbine (T8) However there is no mention of a house (Eircode H53 FF64) that is 530 metres away from Turbines 4 and 5 and 600 metres away from Turbine 8. This property is not accounted for at all in the EIAR.

The Wind Energy Guidelines of 2006 advise a setback distance between a wind turbine and a house of 500 metres. These guidelines are almost 20 years old and outdated.

The 2019 Draft Wind Energy Development Guidelines suggest a mandatory minimum setback distance of 500 metres between a wind turbine and the nearest residential property, and 4 times the tip height, whichever is greater.

Shadow flicker, caused by the rotating blades of wind turbines casting intermittent shadows, can have a significant impact on nearby residents. Prolonged exposure to these flickering shadows can cause visual discomfort, headaches, and even trigger migraines in susceptible individuals. Adequate setback distances and screening measures should be implemented to minimize the potential health effects associated with shadow flicker.

Biodiversity

As residents and landowners in Cooloo and Barnaderg, we are opposed to the proposed Cooloo Wind Farm because of its significant and permanent impact on biodiversity. The project's Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) acknowledges a residual adverse effect on Degraded Raised Bog (habitat 7120), a habitat of County Importance with capacity for natural regeneration (**EIAR Ch. 6, p. 142**). Construction of the proposed floating access road between turbines T7 and T9 will directly remove approximately 0.18 ha of this sensitive peatland and disrupt its hydrological balance (**EIAR Ch. 6, Sec. 6.5.2.1.1**), contrary to the conservation obligations set out under the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).

The site also supports cutover bogs (PB4) and Marsh Fritillary (*Euphydryas aurinia*), an Annex II species protected under European law. Breeding webs were recorded near turbine T5 within metres of proposed construction works (**EIAR Ch. 6, Sec. 6.4.3.3**). The disturbance, dust, and drainage changes associated with turbine and road construction threaten the species' survival locally, directly conflicting with Ireland's duty to maintain favourable conservation status for Annex II species.

Further, the EIAR highlights potential effects on hydrology and connected wetland systems that could degrade otter (*Lutra lutra*) habitat and aquatic fauna (**EIAR Ch. 6, Sec. 6.5.2.1.1 and 6.2.2**). These outcomes are inconsistent with the objectives of the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023–2030, which seeks to prevent net biodiversity loss.

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 Killarerin Community Council and Killarerin 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.

Conclusion

In conclusion, as residents, parents and farmers **living directly west of the Turbines and north west of the 110 kV substation/BESS**, we respectfully 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 therefore strongly object to this proposal and ask that it be refused in full.

For all of these reasons, we respectfully request that **An Coimisiún Pleanála REFUSE permission** for the Cooloo Wind Farm SID (Case PAX07.323761).

Yours faithfully,



Paul Connell



Suzanne Connell

Tygreenane, Barnaderg, Tuam, Co. Galway.

H54 H210