

Formal Objection to the Proposed Cloonkett Wind Farm within the townlands of Glenconnaun More, Craghera and Cloonkett, Co Clare

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ACP-323783-25

Subject: Objection under Section 37E of the Planning and Development Act 2000 - Cloonkett Wind Farm, Co Clare comprising of 14 Turbines, 150 M tip height as well as associated works in the surrounding area.

Dear Inspector

We, Tom and Mary Keane, wish to formally object to the proposed Cloonkett Wind Farm Development We are living just on the 600m line to the nearest proposed turbine. The applicant's maps do not show all our homes by using old ordinance survey maps. We were told they would offer consultations and viewing of their proposed site plans in our local community centre, which never happened. A letter to state that their planning application had been submitted with no consultation was what we received.

EIAR section 6.7.2 states a separation distance of 600m was achieved from the closest landowner located over 518m from the nearest proposed wind turbine. Our land is approx 300m from T6 and 400m from T5 where we cut silage twice a year and cattle graze at other times.

Section 2.1 states that the site is 19km and 20km from Ennis and Kilrush but fails to accurately acknowledge the nearby villages of Coolmeen, Cranny and Kildysart, Ballynacally and Lissycasey which are within 4km max of the proposed site. This omission downplays the potential impacts on these communities, their residents and on their daily lives. It is located beside Gortglass Lake and Cloonsnaughta Lough which are fabulous scenic areas for walkers, cyclists and fishermen. It is the source of water supply for farms and humans in the locality.

Section 2.2 shows our planning application stated as within 500m of the site, reference no 21945 Clare Co Council.

Visual Impact, Dark Sky Reserve and Tourism

West Clare is recognised as a Dark Sky Reserve, valued for its natural night-time environment. The proposal to install 14 turbines with red aviation lights is fundamentally incompatible with the dark sky designation and will create substantial light pollution visible for long distances.

Tourism is a vital part of the local economy, being very close to the Shannon Estuary Way and all that West Clare has to offer. Visitors to West Clare will increasingly be greeted by a corridor of turbines along both sides of the main access routes into the region. There is already a proliferation of turbines on one side of the main Ennis to Kilrush road. Adding another large scale wind farm on the opposite side will drastically alter the visual character of the landscape, potentially deterring tourists and harming local businesses.

Impact on Local Ecosystem and Protected Species

The proposed construction site comprises extensive bogland, which is home to a diverse range of plants and animals, many of which have been noted in reports are on the red list. Of particular concern is the Hen Harrier, a protected species known to inhabit and forage in this landscape. We have seen the white Owl and a smaller brown owl on several occasions on our farm, also the bog lizard. The watercourse contains Eels and small brown trout. The disturbance caused by turbine construction, associated infrastructure and long-term operation presents a serious risk to these vulnerable birds, fish and their habitat. A group of swans fly through the proposed turbine site to and from Gortglass and Cloonsnaughta lakes, to Knockalough Lake, Kilmihill, they too deserve to be protected.

The proposed development is also situated near Special Areas of Conservation - Shannon River SAC and the Cloone River SAC.

Hydrological and Watercourse Concerns

The proposed site has clear hydrological connectivity to nearby watercourses including the Cloone river which flows into the Lower Shannon downstream from the site, the river supports Freshwater Pearl Mussels, a critically endangered species highly sensitive to quality water changes, siltation, and disturbance. I have seen many pearl mussels in my youth in this river flowing into the Cloone (which is connected to this proposed development by the river flowing west and into the Cloone River less than 2Km away.)

On our own farm we have what was historically called “powerful hallows” or sink holes where the water disappears into underground drains only to re-emerge further on at the end of an exposed drain. There is no mention of any of these in the proposed site.

In Construction, activities-such as excavation, road building, and turbine installation-pose substantial risks to soil stability and water quality. The presence of bogland significantly heightens these risks, as peat disturbance can mobilise sediments and pollutants. The planning documents fail to properly assess or mitigate these potential impacts. Any works in or near these ecologically sensitive areas may result in irreversible damage to habitats and species protected under EU and national legislation.

There are also ponds and wetland features connected downstream that could be affected by changes in drainage or sediment flow. To date, these have not been sufficiently considered in the application.

Noise, Amplitude Modulation and Shadow Flicker

We are deeply concerned about the noise impact from the proposed turbines, particularly amplitude modulation, a type of noise characterised by pulsations that can exceed acceptable thresholds. The effects of AM noise on residents-especially those of us living within 3km of turbines which will affect a lot of households in Cranny, Kildysart and Coolmeen have not been adequately evaluated.

Additionally, Shadow Flicker poses a significant disturbance to daily life and wellbeing. Prolonged exposure to flicker can impact our mental health, sleep and general quality of life. These factors together represent a serious intrusion on residential amenity.

Outdated Planning Guidelines

The application has been assessed under the 2006 wind energy guidelines, despite the fact that new, more stringent guidelines are pending. Approving a development of this scale based on outdated standards-especially regarding noise limits, set-back distances, and shadow flicker thresholds-is inappropriate and does not reflect modern understanding of turbine size and their impact on our community.

Cumulative Impact

As there are already numerous turbines in West Clare, the proposal contributes to significant cumulative environmental and visual impacts. These cumulative effects have not been sufficiently addressed in the application, nor has the long-term impact on biodiversity, landscape character, or resident wellbeing.

Conclusion

For the reasons outlined above- ecological risk, hydrological vulnerability, noise and shadow flicker disturbance, visual and tourism impacts, inaccuracies in community proximity reporting, reliance on outdated guidelines and cumulative effects. We respectfully request that our concerns be listened to and that this planning application be refused.

This development poses serious and avoidable risks to the local environment, community and rural landscape. We urge An Board Pleanala to reject the proposal in the interest of environmental protection, our physical and mental health, community wellbeing and sustainable planning.

Thank you for considering our submission.

Yours Faithfully



Tom Keane



Mary B Keane.

P10 ESO enclosed. M. Keane