

Board of Management,
Athenry Primary School,
Tuam Rd.,
Athenry,
Co Galway

To whom it may concern,

The Board of Management of Athenry Primary School wishes to express its concerns regarding the proposed Cashla Peaker Plant development in close proximity to Athenry town. Our school is located approximately 4km from the proposed site, and we are concerned about the potential impact this development may have on the health and wellbeing of our school community. We are also very mindful that a number of other schools are situated in much closer proximity to the proposed plant, which further adds to our concern from a wider community perspective. Our concerns are outlined below:

1. Health and Wellbeing of Children

The proposed plant raises significant concerns in relation to air quality, emissions, and noise pollution. Children and older people are among the most vulnerable groups when exposed to environmental pollutants. Children's developing lungs are particularly susceptible to airborne contaminants, which can contribute to respiratory difficulties, reduced lung function, and potential long-term health complications. Likewise, older individuals are more prone to respiratory illness and adverse health effects arising from reduced air quality.

Any deterioration in air quality therefore represents a heightened and unacceptable risk to these vulnerable groups, with potentially serious implications for their health, wellbeing, and quality of life.

These concerns are amplified for those school communities located closer to the proposed development, where the potential exposure risk is greater.

2. Environmental Impact

The development has the potential to negatively impact the local environment through emissions, increased traffic, and industrial activity.

We are concerned that the cumulative environmental effects have not been sufficiently addressed, particularly in relation to:

- Air pollution and carbon emissions
- Noise and disturbance
- Impact on local biodiversity and ecosystems

Such impacts are incompatible with maintaining a safe and healthy environment for our school community and school communities in the wider Athenry area

3. Traffic and Safety Concerns

The introduction of a large-scale energy facility is likely to result in increased vehicular traffic, including heavy goods vehicles.

This raises further concerns regarding:

- Road safety for pupils, parents, and staff
- Increased traffic congestion in a town already under pressure

4. Incompatibility with Educational Settings

The siting of a peaker plant within the wider catchment of multiple primary schools is fundamentally incompatible with the character and purpose of an educational environment.

Schools require calm, safe, and healthy surroundings in which children can learn and develop. The presence of a nearby industrial energy facility undermines this environment and is not aligned with appropriate land-use planning principles.

5. Climate and Sustainability Considerations

The development of fossil-fuel-based energy infrastructure is inconsistent with Ireland's commitments to climate action and the transition to sustainable energy sources.

Such a development would not align with broader national and local objectives to reduce carbon emissions and promote environmentally responsible planning.

6. Precedent and Long-Term Community Impact

This development may set an undesirable precedent for further industrialisation in proximity to schools and residential areas.

The long-term implications for the wider community, particularly for children and families, must be carefully considered.

In light of the above, the Board of Management wishes to emphasise its genuine concerns regarding the potential implications of this proposed development for the health, safety, and wellbeing of our school community and the wider Athenry area. We respectfully ask that these concerns be given careful and thorough consideration as part of the decision-making process.

Yours faithfully,
Cathriona Cronin (Secretary to the Board of Management)