

OBSERVATION/SUBMISSION TO PLANNING APPLICATION

Case Reference: 324113

Caroline Needham

15 Gort na Ri

Athenry

Galway

H65V389

To: An Coimisiún Pleanála

64 Marlborough Street

Dublin 1

D01 V902

Date: 23 April 2026

Re: Observation to the proposed development of open-cycle gas turbine (OCGT) and generator with ancillary equipment.

Location: Pollnagroagh and Rathmorrissy (Townlands), Athenry, Co. Galway

Applicant: Bord Gáis Energy Limited

Dear Sir/Madam,

My residence is 2.88km from the proposed site of the Cashla Peaker Plant (Athenry).

I am a local resident, a parent of young children, and a teacher in a local school. My concerns are based not only on my family's wellbeing, but also on the potential long-term impact this development may have on the health and environment of the wider community, particularly children.

Cumulative Health Impacts Over Time

I have serious concerns about how this proposed peaker plant would operate over time. Although it would run intermittently, it would do so at extremely high intensity, and the potential use of diesel adds to these concerns, as it could result in repeated short-term spikes in air pollution. While individual emission events may be brief, the fact that they could occur repeatedly over many years—potentially up to 2050—raises concerns about ongoing exposure and cumulative health impacts.

Pollutants such as nitrogen oxides and fine particulate matter are known to worsen asthma, trigger respiratory symptoms, and contribute to long-term conditions including chronic respiratory and cardiovascular disease. This is particularly concerning for nearby residents, especially vulnerable groups such as children, older people, and those with existing health conditions. There is still uncertainty regarding whether the lasting and cumulative effects of these emissions have been fully studied, which leads to real concerns that continued exposure during the development's lifetime could affect public health and wellbeing in the future.

Exposure During Daily Activities and School Times

As a parent in the area, I am concerned that children living nearby or attending local schools will be exposed to higher levels of air pollution when the plant is operating at peak times, particularly when they are outdoors during school drop-off, break times, and after-school activities. During physical activity, children breathe more rapidly, increasing their intake of pollutants and making them more vulnerable to harmful effects. What is especially worrying is the potential for repeated exposure during key stages of development, which could have lasting impacts on their health and wellbeing. Overall, this raises serious concerns as to whether these risks have been fully considered.

Cumulative Impact on Child's Development

As a parent in the area, I am concerned about the impact of fine particulate matter over time. These pollutants can travel long distances and accumulate, meaning children may be exposed not only during peak pollution events but also through ongoing low-level exposure. The cumulative effect of this is particularly worrying, as repeated exposure during key stages of growth and development could have lasting impacts on lung development and overall health. From a community perspective, this raises serious concerns about the long-term safety of this development for children, and it is not clear that these cumulative impacts have been fully considered.

Conclusion

This proposal presents important concerns regarding people, public health, agriculture, and the surrounding environment. Because the documentation is complex and community engagement has been limited, many individuals have found it challenging to take part in the decision-making process. Communities should not face uncertain or potentially substantial environmental risks. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that planning permission be refused.

Yours Sincerely,

Caroline Needham

Name: Caroline Needham

Date: 23 April 2026