

OBSERVATION/SUBMISSION TO PLANNING APPLICATION

Case Reference: 324113

Shraddha and Chetan murti Prehn

Tober na Bhfinn

Athenry

Galway

H65XE61

To: An Coimisiún Pleanála

64 Marlborough Street

Dublin 1

D01 V902

Date: 16 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,

We run a Yoga business, called Galway and Athenry Yoga Center. We have been teaching yoga here for the last 34 years in and around Athenry and choose to set up our business here as it is in the countryside with clean fresh air.

In our yoga classes we encourage people to take slow deep breaths, since covid we have installed air ventilation systems in our own premises so fresh air is coming in to the room. Its important that the air is not polluted. We often have clients that have lung illness and the last thing they need is polluted air. This peaker plant will pollute the air and affect peoples health. This will effect any health business that is in the area or would have liked to come to this area.

Human Health & Air Pollution

Cumulative Health Impacts Over Time

The intermittent but high-intensity operation of a peaker plant, combined with periodic diesel use, can result in repeated short-term spikes in air pollution. While individual emission events may appear limited in duration, repeated exposure over time (until at least 2050) creates a cumulative health burden. Pollutants such as nitrogen oxides and fine particulate matter can worsen asthma, trigger respiratory symptoms, and contribute to long-term health impacts, including chronic respiratory disease and cardiovascular conditions. The cumulative effect of these emissions over the operational lifespan of the development has not been fully assessed, particularly in relation to long-term exposure pathways and sensitive populations living nearby.

Water & Groundwater

Long-Term Accumulation of Pollutants and Chemical Residues

The presence of diesel storage tanks, hardstanding areas, drainage systems, and associated infrastructure increases the risk of pollutants entering soil and groundwater over time (until at least 2050). Hydrocarbons (pollutants from gas, diesel) and chemical residues may accumulate gradually, particularly where there are repeated minor leaks, operational losses, or accidental discharges. These impacts may not be immediately visible but can result in long-term degradation of groundwater quality and soil health, affecting both environmental protection and agricultural productivity.

Children & Health

Vulnerability to Diesel-Related Air Pollution

Children are particularly vulnerable to air pollutants due to their developing lungs, higher breathing rates relative to body size, and increased time spent outdoors. The intermittent high-output operation of a peaker plant, particularly where diesel is used during start-up or peak demand periods, may expose children to short but concentrated bursts of pollution. Diesel emissions contain fine particulate matter and nitrogen oxides that can penetrate deep into the lungs, potentially affecting lung development and increasing the risk of respiratory illness.

Cumulative Impact on Child's Development

Fine particulate matter can travel significant distances and accumulate over time, meaning children may be exposed not only during peak events but also through repeated low-level exposure. The cumulative effect of these exposures is particularly concerning during key stages of physical development, where long-term impacts on lung function and overall health may arise.

Local Roads, Safety & Schools

Increased Heavy Traffic and Diesel Transport Risks

The placement of the proposed site entrance on the L3103 raises severe safety concerns due to the inherently hazardous nature of this specific stretch of road. The carriageway is critically narrow, struggling to safely accommodate two passing Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs), and completely lacks a hard shoulder to allow for any margin of error. Compounding these dangers are the presence of blind dips and corners, which significantly reduce visibility and sightlines for all road users. These critical safety deficiencies create an unacceptable traffic hazard that must be comprehensively addressed.

In addition, the proposed development will result in increased traffic on local roads, including heavy goods vehicles, construction traffic, and fuel deliveries such as diesel tankers. These roads are rural in nature, often narrow with limited visibility, and are already used by residents, agricultural machinery, and school-related

traffic. The introduction of additional heavy vehicle movements significantly increases the risk of collisions and creates a more hazardous environment for all road users.

Fire Safety & Major Accident Hazards

Risk of Fire and Explosion from Fuel Storage

The proposed development involves the storage, handling, and use of highly flammable fuels, including natural gas and diesel, which present inherent risks of fire and explosion. In the event of equipment failure, leakage, or operational malfunction, these substances could ignite and result in a serious incident. Given the high-intensity and intermittent operation of a peaker plant, the potential for such events cannot be dismissed. The consequences for nearby homes, people, farmland, and livestock could be significant.

Visual Impact & Landscape

Landscape Character and Policy Conflict

The proposed development represents a significant industrial intrusion into a rural landscape characterised by agricultural land use and dispersed residential development. The scale, height, and industrial nature of the plant, including associated infrastructure such as buildings, stacks, lighting, and fuel storage, will fundamentally alter the character of the area. This type of development does not appear consistent with the existing landscape or its capacity to absorb such change. This raises concerns under Policies LCM1, LCM2 and LCM3 of the Galway County Development Plan, which require the protection of landscape character, sensitivity, and capacity, and seek to ensure that development is appropriate to its setting.

Climate Impact

Lock-in of Fossil Fuel Infrastructure

The proposed development represents new fossil fuel infrastructure with an operational lifespan extending to at least 2050. This risks locking in carbon-intensive energy generation at a time when national and EU policy require rapid decarbonisation. Investment in gas-fired infrastructure may delay or displace the development of renewable energy and storage solutions, creating long-term dependency on fossil fuels that is not consistent with climate objectives.

Community Engagement

Lack of Clear, Accessible, and Effective Communication

There appears to have been insufficient and ineffective community engagement in relation to this project. Many residents did not receive any direct communication or notification regarding the development. While some individuals report receiving a flyer or attending an information event, the material provided was highly technical and difficult to understand without specialist knowledge. This significantly limits meaningful participation. Effective consultation requires that information is accessible, clearly explained, and actively communicated to all affected members of the community. In this case, the level of detail and technical complexity of the documentation creates a barrier to understanding, meaning that many people are unable to fully assess the potential impacts of the development.

Planning & Assessment

Over-Reliance on Mitigation Measures and Uncertainty of Outcomes

The Environmental Impact Assessment relies heavily on mitigation measures to reduce environmental

impacts. However, mitigation does not eliminate impacts, and its effectiveness over time is uncertain, particularly over the long operational lifespan of the development (until at least 2050). There is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that mitigation measures will perform as predicted under real-world conditions. This creates uncertainty regarding whether impacts will remain within acceptable limits, particularly in relation to emissions, noise, and environmental protection.

Operational Uncertainty and Lack of Enforceable Limits

There is no clear or enforceable limit on how often or how long the plant will operate. As a demand-led facility, operation may be more frequent or prolonged than assumed in the Environmental Impact Assessment. This includes diesel use during start-up and operation. If this occurs, impacts such as emissions, noise, and traffic may be significantly greater than predicted. This uncertainty raises concerns regarding the accuracy of the assessment.

Conclusion

This proposal raises real and valid concerns for people, public health, agriculture, and the local environment. The complexity of the documentation and limitations in community engagement have made it difficult for the public to fully participate in the decision-making process. Communities should not be exposed to uncertain and potentially significant environmental impacts. I strongly urge that planning permission is not granted.

Yours Sincerely,

Shraddha Murti Prehn
Chetan Murti Prehn

Name: Shraddha and Chetan murti Prehn

Date: 16 April 2026