

# OBSERVATION/SUBMISSION TO PLANNING APPLICATION

Case Reference: 324113

Clair Carr  
Derrydonnell more  
Athenry  
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H65KF54

To: An Coimisiún Pleanála  
64 Marlborough Street  
Dublin 1  
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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 2.11km from the proposed site of the Cashla Peaker Plant (Athenry).

Living, kids education, social activities all in local area. Living in close approximation to it.

## **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.

### **Dependence on Groundwater for Domestic and Agricultural Use**

I am concerned about the potential risk to groundwater from this proposed development. The area depends heavily on clean groundwater for essential needs, including drinking water, farming, and livestock, making it a vital resource for the community. The introduction of an industrial facility involving the storage and handling of fuels creates an ongoing risk to this resource, and any contamination, even if accidental, could have serious and long-lasting consequences for water quality, livestock health, and agricultural productivity.

What is particularly worrying is that once groundwater becomes contaminated, the damage can be extremely difficult—if not impossible—to reverse. This raises serious concerns about whether this type of development is appropriate for this location. To sum up, significant worries persist that the dangers to groundwater have not been fully assessed, and any consequences could be permanent.

### **ACRES Compliance**

As a local farmer, I am very concerned about how this proposed development could affect my ability to meet environmental standards. Farmers in this area already operate under strict requirements, including schemes such as ACRES and nitrates regulations, and we take these responsibilities seriously. However, emissions, airborne pollution, or runoff from this peaker plant—particularly linked to diesel use—could increase nitrate levels or environmental pressure, potentially pushing farms out of compliance through no fault of their own.

As an ACRES participant, any increase in pollution associated with this development could directly impact compliance with scheme requirements, leading to penalties, financial loss, or exclusion from essential programmes. This creates an unfair situation where farmers may be held responsible for environmental impacts arising from an industrial activity outside their control, placing an unjust burden on the farming community.

### **School Safety and Peak-Time Risks**

As someone who lives locally and extensively uses this road, I am concerned about the proposed location of the site entrance on the L3103. This section of road is already extremely dangerous, as it is narrow, has no hard shoulder, and does not provide sufficient space for two heavy goods vehicles to pass safely. Visibility is also poor due to blind dips and sharp bends, meaning drivers often cannot see oncoming traffic in time, and introducing a site entrance at this location would significantly increase the risk to all road users.

There are strong concerns that adding traffic—particularly large vehicles—would worsen these existing hazards, especially near homes and schools during busy periods such as morning and afternoon times. The interaction between heavy goods vehicles, farm machinery, and everyday local traffic creates a higher risk of accidents, particularly for children and other vulnerable road users. Overall, this is not a suitable location for this level of traffic, and the associated safety risks for the community are a critical concern.

### **Landscape Character and Policy Conflict**

There are serious concerns that the proposed development would represent 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 buildings, stacks, lighting, and fuel storage—would fundamentally alter the character of the area, introducing a visually dominant feature into what is currently a

quiet rural setting. This type of development does not appear consistent with the existing landscape, nor does the area have the capacity to absorb such change without significant adverse effects. These concerns are particularly relevant in the context of the Galway County Development Plan, specifically Policies LCM1, LCM2, and LCM3, which seek to protect landscape character, recognise landscape sensitivity, and ensure that development is appropriate to its setting.

### **Lock-in of Fossil Fuel Infrastructure**

There are serious concerns that the proposed development represents new fossil fuel infrastructure with a long operational lifespan, potentially extending to at least 2050, which risks locking in carbon-intensive energy generation at a time when national and EU policy require rapid decarbonisation. Investment in gas-fired infrastructure of this nature may delay or displace the development of renewable energy and energy storage solutions, leading to continued reliance on fossil fuels over the long term. Overall, there is concern that the proposal is not aligned with current climate objectives and may undermine the transition to a low-carbon energy system.

### **Operational Uncertainty and Lack of Enforceable Limits**

There are concerns that the Environmental Impact Assessment relies on assumed operational scenarios rather than fully assessing worst-case conditions. As the plant will operate in response to electricity demand, there is uncertainty regarding how frequently or intensively it may run, including periods when diesel will be used, potentially resulting in higher emissions than those modelled. Without a thorough evaluation of the worst-case scenario, it is not possible to confidently rule out the possibility of major environmental impacts.

### **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,

Clair Carr

Name: Clair Carr  
Date: 23 April 2026