OBSERVATION/SUBMISSION TO PLANNING APPLICATION

Case Reference: 324113

Donald and Veronica Murray

Rathmorrissey

Athenry

Galway

H65 HX43

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 550m from the proposed site of the Cashla Peaker Plant (Athenry).

We moved back to Ireland to be closer to our Grandchildren and our daughter as we are now semi-retired. We have been visiting Rathmorrissey our daughters home in Rathmorrissey since 2009 and have always loved being there. The area itself is very quiet, local forest nearby, green fields and lots of nature around, which is what we both love. We were extremely shocked to learn of a power plant planned for the area some months ago. This give us both extreme anxiety for our health, our families health, particularly our 5 grandchildren health. We really find it difficult to understand the idea of a power plant in such a remote area, down our private road. Is this really a suitable location? When we drive on the road, one 1 single car can get buy and we are always so conscious when on this road regarding traffic. We are approaching retirement and had planned on living out our remaining years in the comfort of Rathmorrissey, surrounded by our grandchildren in a safe healthy environment. This dream could potentially be lost for us if this emission heavy power plants is granted planning.

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.

Vulnerability to Diesel-Related Air Pollution

As a parent living in the area, I am particularly concerned about the potential impact of this proposed development on children's health. Children are particularly susceptible to the effects of air pollution because of their developing respiratory systems, elevated respiration rates, and greater exposure to outdoor environments. Although peaker plants do not function on a continuous basis, they can produce significantly elevated levels of output during initial start-up phases or times of peak energy demand. This may lead to brief yet significant emissions of pollutants, particularly when diesel fuel is utilised. These emissions contain fine particles and nitrogen oxides that can penetrate deep into the lungs, which may affect lung development and increase the risk of respiratory conditions such as asthma. Overall, this raises serious concerns about the health and wellbeing of children and 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.

Unsuitability of Rural Road Network

There are serious concerns about the proposed site entrance on the L3103, which is an exceptionally dangerous stretch of road where introducing an access point would create an unacceptable level of risk. The road is extremely narrow and cannot safely accommodate two heavy goods vehicles passing at the same time, there is no hard shoulder to allow for safe manoeuvring or recovery, and visibility is severely limited due to blind dips and sharp corners. These are significant existing hazards that already pose a real danger to road users, and the addition of a site entrance would further increase that risk.

There are also concerns regarding the suitability of local roads for this type of traffic. Rural roads are not built to support continuous industrial activity, and when heavy trucks, farm equipment, and regular local vehicles share these routes, it often leads to difficult and dangerous traffic conditions. The introduction of additional industrial traffic, including construction vehicles and diesel deliveries, would further increase the risk and make these roads more dangerous for all users.

Scale, Integration, and Rural Context

There are serious concerns that the scale and industrial nature of the proposed development are not in keeping with the surrounding rural environment. Building large-scale plants, structures, and infrastructure would result in a prominent addition to the landscape that does not match the area's current appearance. There is no evidence showing this development could blend into its environment or that its visual effects could be properly reduced. This raises concerns in relation to the Galway County Development Plan, particularly Policy GB1, which requires that developments be designed and located in a manner that allows them to integrate effectively into the landscape.

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.

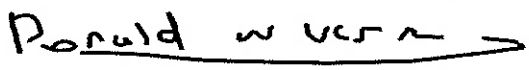
Diesel Use Not Fully Assessed or Limited

Diesel is used beyond emergencies, including routine tests and operations. This leads to extra emissions, odours, and environmental risks not fully covered by the Environmental Impact Assessment. The frequency and impact of diesel use are unclear, making the total environmental effect uncertain.

Conclusion

Due to the concerns mentioned—such as uncertainty about how often operations will occur, overall environmental impacts, and risks related to diesel use—this project is not viewed as proper or sustainable development. There has also been insufficient consideration of the possibility that the actual impacts could be greater than those evaluated. Therefore, we respectfully ask that approval for this application be refused.

Yours Sincerely,



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