OBSERVATION/SUBMISSION TO PLANNING APPLICATION

Case Reference: 324113

enda morrissey

Castlelambert (Deerpark)

ATHENRY

Galway

H65A365

To: An Coimisiún Pleanála

64 Marlborough Street

Dublin 1

D01 V902

Date: 24 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 1.93km from the proposed site of the Cashla Peaker Plant (Athenry).

I am writing a statement to formally record my strong objection to the proposed gas and diesel power plant in Athenry and to explain how this development will directly impact my family and my community.

Air Pollution & My Children's Health
Peaker plants gas or diesel fired emit nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide, fine particulate matter, and volatile organic compounds when they operate, often during hot or polluted days when air quality is already poor.
My children are particularly vulnerable because:
- They have respiratory challenges including but not limited to Asthma.
- As my children are young, they will breathe more air per body weight than adults and therefore breath a higher concentration of polluted air.
- This level of exposure will exacerbate their health challenges and later in life will further increase of the potential for respiratory infections, reduced lung function, and cardiovascular disease.
Studies directly link fossil fuel air pollution to increased asthma attacks, emergency visits, and premature

mortality in children living near power plants

Fossil Fuels vs Clean Energy
Why would the Irish government be engaging with an international organisation to utilize Fossil Fuel in energy production given the clear negative impacts fossil fuels have on the environment and the Irish people's health:
1. Air Pollution and Health Impacts
- Emit carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide, and particulate matter which are linked to asthma, heart disease, stroke, and premature death, especially in children and older adults.
2. Climate Change
- Primary driver of greenhouse gas emissions which contributes to global warming, extreme weather, sea level rise, and ecosystem disruption.
3. Finite Resources
- Non renewable; eventually depleted which will lead to increase extraction costs as easily accessible reserves decline & environmental damage
- Diesel pills harm land, water, and wildlife resulting in long lasting impacts on local communities.

When alternative clean energy resources are currently being generated and constructed in the area offering low or zero emissions, being renewable and sustainable, benefiting from falling costs due to technological advances, improving Irelands energy independence, and having significantly less environmental impact with little or no adverse effect on human health it is difficult to justify reliance on fossil fuel based alternatives.

I urge An Coimisiun Pleanala to refuse planning permission for this development.

Regards,

Enda Morrissey & Emer O Callaghan

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.

Risk of Groundwater Contamination from Fuel Storage and Handling

I am concerned about the risks of soil and groundwater contamination from this proposed peaker plant. The development would involve the storage and handling of fuels such as diesel, along with lubricating oils and other chemicals, all of which could pose a risk to the surrounding environment. There is a real possibility that

these substances could leak, spill, or enter the ground through surface runoff over the long lifetime of the facility, potentially up to 2050, and even small but repeated incidents could lead to a gradual build-up of pollution in soil and groundwater.

This is particularly worrying because once groundwater becomes contaminated, it is extremely difficult and costly to remediate, and the impacts can persist for decades. This raises serious concerns about the long-term protection of local water resources and the surrounding environment. There remains uncertainty about whether these risks have been adequately managed, raising substantial worries that the project might cause permanent damage to water quality. This would violate the obligations under EU Directive 2000/60/EC, which mandates the protection of water bodies and prohibits their deterioration.

Long-Term Accumulation of Pollutants and Chemical Residues

I am particularly concerned about the risk of pollution to soil and groundwater from this proposed development. The inclusion of diesel storage tanks, hardstanding areas, drainage systems, and other infrastructure increases the likelihood that pollutants could gradually enter the ground over time, potentially up to 2050. Substances such as hydrocarbons from diesel and gas, along with other chemical residues, may build up slowly, particularly where there are repeated small leaks, routine operational losses, or occasional spills, with impacts accumulating over time.

What is especially worrying is that this type of pollution may not be immediately visible but could result in long-term damage to groundwater quality and soil health. This has implications not only for environmental protection but also for local agriculture, which depends on clean soil and water. Overall, there is significant concern that these long-term and cumulative risks have not been fully addressed and could have lasting consequences for the local environment and livelihoods.

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.

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.

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.

Underestimation of Operational Emissions

There are concerns that the Environmental Impact Assessment may underestimate the emissions associated with the proposed development by relying on assumed operating patterns. As a demand-led facility, the plant may operate more frequently or for longer periods than predicted, particularly during times of pressure on the energy system. This creates uncertainty around the total level of greenhouse gas emissions over the lifetime of the project and raises concerns that the full climate impact of the development has not been adequately assessed.

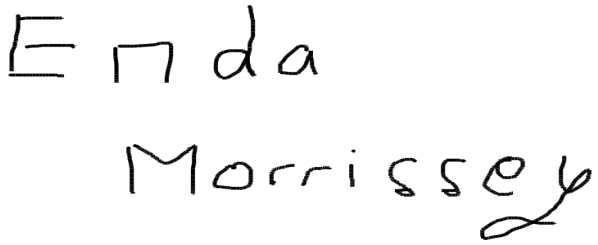
Operational Uncertainty and Lack of Enforceable Limits

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

The proposal raises important concerns about environmental protection, public health, agriculture, road safety, and community welfare. Due to uncertainties regarding how often operations would occur, diesel usage, and overall impacts, this development cannot be considered acceptable. A thorough and cautious assessment is needed to ensure that significant environmental effects are avoided, but such an evaluation has not been conducted. Therefore, I recommend that approval for this development be refused.

Yours Sincerely,



Name: enda morrissey
Date: 24 April 2026