

# OBSERVATION/SUBMISSION TO PLANNING APPLICATION

Case Reference: 324113

Eric, Lorraine, Kyle and Daniel Connolly

Castlelambert

Athenry

Galway

Galway

H65V449

To: An Coimisiún Pleanála

64 Marlborough Street

Dublin 1

D01 V902

Date: 21 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 730m from the proposed site of the Cashla Peaker Plant (Athenry).

We have great concerns regarding our health. Eric suffers from severe asthma and is extremely sensitive and reactive to fumes which triggers his asthma. Having 2 young children it causes great concerns about their health and respiratory issues in the future. We also have huge concerns about roads and infrastructure in our area and the severe disruptions that are planned over long periods of time which will lead to road closures and poor access to our own home which we have worked so hard for.

## **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.

### **Increased Heavy Traffic and Diesel Transport Risks**

As someone who lives locally and uses this road, I am concerned about road safety in relation to the proposed entrance on the L3103. This stretch of road is already extremely narrow, with no hard shoulder, making it difficult for two heavy goods vehicles to pass safely and leaving no margin for error. Visibility is also poor due to blind dips and sharp bends, meaning drivers often cannot see oncoming traffic in time. The proposed development would increase traffic levels, including heavy goods vehicles, construction traffic, and fuel deliveries such as diesel tankers, all of which require space and clear sightlines that this road does not provide.

Given that these rural roads are used by residents, farm machinery, and school-related traffic, the addition of significant industrial traffic would increase the risk of accidents and create a more hazardous environment. Overall, there is strong concern that the existing road infrastructure is not suitable for this level of traffic and that the associated safety risks have not been adequately addressed.

### **Impact on Residential Amenity and Long-Term Visual Change**

There are concerns that the proposed development will be clearly visible from surrounding homes, roads, and farmland, resulting in a permanent change to the visual environment. This has the potential to impact residential amenity, reduce enjoyment of the area, and alter the overall character of the landscape, with a large and visually prominent industrial facility introduced into what is currently a rural setting. Given the long operational lifespan of the development, potentially extending to at least 2050, these impacts would be long-lasting and not easily mitigated. The addition of industrial structures, lighting, and ongoing activity represents a significant and enduring change that requires careful consideration.

### **Conflict with National and EU Climate Targets**

There are serious concerns regarding Ireland's legally binding obligations to reduce greenhouse gas

emissions under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, as well as wider EU climate frameworks. The continued development of gas-fired generation, including peaker plants, will result in additional carbon dioxide emissions over the lifetime of the project, raising questions about alignment with national carbon budgets and emissions reduction targets. In this context, there is concern that the proposal may undermine the State's ability to meet its climate commitments and transition to a low-carbon energy system.

### **Lack of Worst-Case Assessment**

The Environmental Impact Assessment bases its findings on expected operating scenarios instead of evaluating the worst-case possibilities. Because the plant's operation will depend on electricity demand, it's unclear how often or how intensely it might run. This uncertainty also applies to diesel usage, which could produce higher emissions than those estimated. Without a thorough assessment of the most severe potential impacts, it is impossible to guarantee that major environmental effects will not happen.

### **Conclusion**

There are serious concerns regarding environmental impacts, safety risks, and the adequacy of the assessment process. The Environmental Impact Assessment overlooks cumulative, long-term, and worst-case scenarios, depending instead on assumptions that may not accurately represent the actual operation of the development. This leads to considerable uncertainty regarding the real extent of its impacts. For these reasons, it is respectfully requested that approval for the proposed development be refused.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, written in a cursive style. The signature reads "Eric, Lorraine, Kyle and Daniel Connolly".

Name: Eric, Lorraine, Kyle and Daniel Connolly

Date: 21 April 2026