

Gearoid & Zoe Harty,
Castlelambert
Athenry
Co Galway
H65FD77

To: An Coimisiún Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 V902

Dare April 24 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

I am a concerned local and I live very close to this proposed gas powered peaker plant. I am not against any form of infrastructure, and I believe that energy security has never been more important for us as a country.

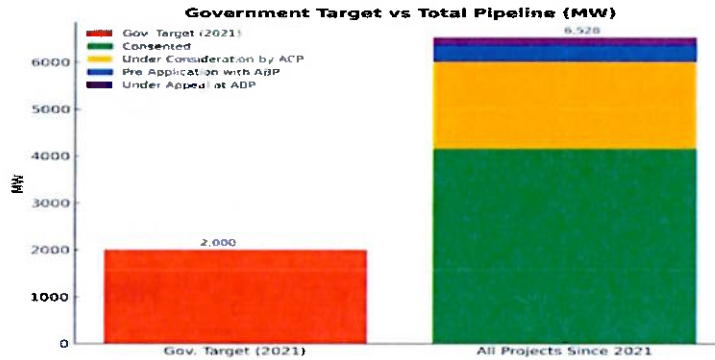
However, I do feel that the location of this proposed plant is completely wrong and in the incorrect location due to improper assessment.

This proposed plant is now being built due to a financial incentive for the developer / client but at a detriment to the local community.

Factually numerous landowners in my locality were approached and the one landowner who said "yes" dictated the decision for the proposed plant to be planned.

There is no high level strategic plan for locations of these plants and surely this is what's is required.

The government target of 2000MW of electricity has already been achieved but from the government plan in 2021, there is currently 4000MW of electricity already available from peaker plants nationwide. The target has been well surpassed. 4-7 plants were expected to be built to meet the target. In total 17 individual plants have been granted permission



Athenry heritage town is one of the fastest growing towns in the west of Ireland with huge investment in roads, development and thankfully an attractive locality for large multinationals to come and enhance our town, provide employment and contribute to our community.

When you take all this into account – why would one build:

- The largest gas powered peaker plant in Ireland adjacent to the heritage town
- The prevailing winds will carry the emissions over the town
- 2 of the largest schools in Connaught are located down wind of the plant
- The site is solely picked due to the financial gain of the developer

The location alone will have a detrimental effect on our large school fraternity and local Sporting organizations both withing close location of this proposed plant:

Schools:

- Lisheenkyle National School (approx. 2.81km) — confirmed in the NTS (Section 4.1.1) as a community asset subject to significant adverse construction-phase impacts - **Approx 250 students**
- Presentation College, Athenry (approx. 2.52km) - **Approx 1100 students**
- Clarin College (approx. 3.13km) - **Approx 1100 students**
- Gaelscoil Riada (approx. 3.39km) **Approx 170 students**
- Coláiste na hEachréidh (approx. 3.46km) **Approx 260 students**
- Athenry Primary School (approx. 3.49km) **Approx 520 students**

Sporting Organisations:

- Athenry Athletic Club (approx. 1.7km) **Approx 1000 Members**
- Athenry Football Club (approx. 2.26km) **Approx 800 Members**
- Carnaun GAA Sports Complex (approx. 2.69km) **Approx 800 Members**
- Raheen Sports Complex (approx. 2.80km) **Approx 1000 Members**
- Athenry Golf Club (approx. 2.8km) **Approx 1050 Members**

ROAD & TRAFFIC — L3103

The local road where this plant will be entering and exiting onto is completely insufficient. I use the road on a daily basis, and the primary existing traffic are

- Local farmers attending a Mart 4 days a week
- School traffic for 5 schools
- Large local Construction company that moves large construction equipment on a daily basis
- Locals commuting to and from Athenry town

This proposed plant will add:

- Approx. 200 HGV tankers needed just to fill diesel tanks on initial fill
- Continuous HGV diesel deliveries for the plant's entire lifetime
- Hazardous wastewater removed by HGV trucks on a continuing basis — all on the L3103, a small rural road not designed for this volume
- Heavy construction traffic: machinery, concrete, pipework
- Road closures on the L3103 affecting residents, school runs and businesses
Restricted access for extended periods

This is grossly unfair to the local community especially when the site is chosen solely on financial incentive for the developer.

The road infrastructure itself is not safe for the movement and operation of machinery associated with the construction of this plant – the white continuous lines on the pictures below demonstrate the vehicles cannot pass across. But on the road report it clearly shows the vehicles having to cross over the other side of the road to enter and exit the facility.



View 1: Road to narrow, continuous white line truck must cross over to enter exit



View 2: Road to narrow, continuous white line truck must cross over to enter exit

Parents & schools

In addition to the road and the community one should know:

- 6 Schools within a close proximity
- Children are most vulnerable to air pollution
- HGV traffic on the L3103 creates serious road safety risks for children
- Annual diesel testing releases harmful fumes near schools
- Noise and pollution will affect children's health and learning

Water & Ground water

The site sits on vulnerable karst limestone geology.

A spill from 6.2 million litres of diesel could contaminate private wells and local water sources that are extremely difficult to remediate.

I have my own borehole well due to a lack of water infrastructure in the area when I was building my home. I have a genuine fear of the contaminants that will fall from the chimney and disperse into the groundwater system but also a fear that with the size of the proposed plant the runoff containments or pollution that will get into the ground water system

Air Quality & Health

One of my kids has extreme asthma and I have serious concerns of the emissions from the chimney and that due to the insufficiency of the grid this plant will be running longer than that stated.

There are numerous new houses built in the locality and in line with building regulations and these dwellings have:

- No chimneys
- Heat Recovery systems that pull in fresh air and extract stale air from houses.

Is not somewhat unfair that a 30m chimney now is built adjacent to these houses and that extracted harmful emissions will automatically be pulled into these near by community homes?

The pollutants released directly link to:

- Asthma attacks and worsening lung conditions
- Reduced lung growth in children
- Higher risk of heart disease and stroke
- Increased hospital admissions
- Most at risk: children, elderly, anyone with asthma, heart or lung conditions.
- Research on similar U.S. plants shows significantly higher rates of childhood asthma and emergency hospital visits — even for plants used infrequently. Proximity is the key factor.

This proposed plant will have a negative impact on the local area based on the following:

- **Landscape & permanence**
 - A 30-metre industrial stack, 24/7 floodlighting, and large structures will permanently alter the rural character of this area.
 - 36m telecoms mast
 - PP granted for another on nearby

- **Operational phase (ongoing)**
 - Regular HGV movements on the L3103 — indefinitely
 - Hazardous waste trucks for the full life of the plant
 - Continuous long-term pressure on road safety

- **Residents**
 - This plant will harm local air quality and increase health risks for my family
 - Diesel testing releases harmful fumes every year with no limit on duration
 - Hundreds of HGV movements on the L3103 will disrupt daily life
 - Fire and explosion risks from 6.2 million litres of diesel concern me greatly
 - This permanently industrialises a rural community

- **Local businesses**
 - L3103 road closures will block customer access and delay deliveries
 - Industrialisation will damage tourism, agri-food and retail appeal
 - Long-term noise and pollution will reduce investment and land values

- **Farmers & Property Owners**
 - Hazardous wastewater HGVs will use the L3103 continuously
 - Karst geology means a diesel leak could contaminate wells and land
 - Construction will restrict access for extended periods
 - Industrial development will negatively affect land values

Climate & energy policy

This project is presented as a "bridge to renewables" yet designed to operate until 2050. With no strict operational limits, it risks becoming a long-term fossil fuel facility, conflicting with Ireland's net-zero targets and at a cost to our local community.

COMAH / Seveso Hazard Site & Emergency Preparedness

- 6.2 million litres of diesel on-site = Major Accident Hazard facility.
- Risks include fire, explosion, and mandatory emergency evacuation. Only one access route via the L3103 — potentially delaying ambulances and fire services.
- No intention whatsoever to have on site staff which would leave concerns about the sites ability to meet COMAH regulations, unless everything is to be fully automated.
- A lack of full automation for pumps, foam, and deluge systems.
- No information about backup systems either - if there aren't staff and automation was to be relied upon; there would need to be a backup system!
- The remote monitoring systems and automated firefighting systems would need to be top notch to effectively manage this and would be difficult to achieve satisfactorily.

There would need to be a robust maintenance and testing schedule, and no evidence and detail of this.

There should be 30-60 minutes of independent firefighting - without on-site staff. Hard to see how this could be achieved. This would be of particular concern given local fire service infrastructure (retained and not fully resourced) and all more than half an hour away

How can the proposed plant representatives suggest they can self-sufficiently deal with a fire without 24/7 on site staff, with the added lack of fire service resources and difficulty getting a crew from Athenry

In summary as I said in my opening statement, I am in no way against progressing infrastructure and agree with energy security. However not only is this not the solution, but it also is proposed in the wrong location, a location solely based on financial gain. The negative effects will be felt for generations to come and will affect all aspects of local society. We trust you will make the right decision and refuse planning for this plant



Family



Friends



Neighbour

Yours faithfully,

Gearoid & Zoe Harty