

OBSERVATION/SUBMISSION TO PLANNING APPLICATION

Case Reference: 324113

Gerry and Bernie Dempsey

Moanbaun

Athenry

GW

Galway

H65K283

To: An Coimisiún Pleanála

64 Marlborough Street

Dublin 1

D01 V902

Date: 22 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 1.99km from the proposed site of the Cashla Peaker Plant (Athenry).

As we are living within 2 kms.of this proposed fossil fuel powered plant we have concerns about the negative environmental and health risks that would result from the emission of NOx and other noxious fumes into the atmosphere.

High-Intensity Emissions and Diesel Impacts

I am concerned about the potential impact of air pollution from this proposed development. Pollutants such as nitrogen oxides (NOx) and fine particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10) are known to damage air quality, irritate the lungs, and contribute to long-term harm to both human health and the environment. Although the plant would not operate continuously, it may run at extremely high output when required, leading to short but

intense bursts of pollution, particularly during start-up and peak demand periods. The possible use of diesel during these times is especially worrying, as it produces higher levels of harmful emissions, including nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide, and particulate matter.

These pollutants can penetrate deep into the lungs and enter the bloodstream, increasing the risk of respiratory and cardiovascular illness, particularly for vulnerable groups such as children, older people, and those with existing health conditions. Fine particulate matter can also travel long distances and accumulate over time, meaning the impacts may extend beyond the immediate area and persist in the long term. In summary, I have reservations regarding the thoroughness of the assessment of these emissions. This issue presents significant implications for public health and environmental protection, especially in relation to EU air quality standards established by Directive 2008/50/EC.

Short-Term Exposure

I'm concerned that emissions from the planned peaker plant could impact the environment, particularly if diesel is used at start-up or during periods of high demand. Diesel exhaust releases various dangerous pollutants, such as nitrogen oxides, fine particles, and other toxic chemicals. These substances are associated with respiratory issues, impaired lung function, and heart disease. What is especially worrying is that these emissions may occur in short but intense bursts rather than in a steady, predictable way, particularly during start-up and peak operation. The average-based modelling used in the assessment seems not to capture this kind of real-world operation completely.

There are worries that residents in nearby areas might face greater pollution levels than expected, especially when the weather is calm and pollutants linger instead of spreading out. There is considerable uncertainty regarding how accurate these air quality forecasts are, which makes it hard for the community to be sure that both public health and the environment are truly safeguarded.

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.

Public Health Protection

There is significant concern within the community about the potential impact of air pollution from this proposed peaker plant on human health, particularly during periods when it is operating at full capacity and emissions are highest. The possible use of diesel is especially worrying, as it introduces additional harmful pollutants that can travel long distances and accumulate in the environment.

There is ongoing uncertainty concerning the operational frequency of the plant, its emission rates, and the extent of public exposure to pollutants through 2050. Because these issues remain unresolved, it is difficult to verify that all risks have been considered. Given these unknowns, it is wise to adopt a careful strategy to protect public health; unless definitive evidence proves no harm, any dangers to residents should be

considered as part of the planning process.

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.

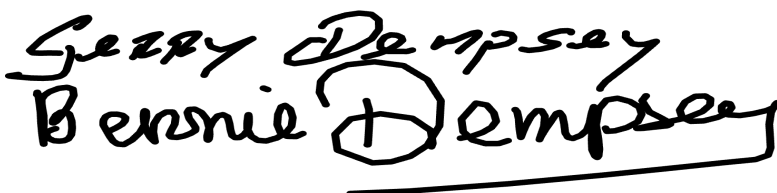
Operational Uncertainty and Lack of Enforceable Limits

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,

Handwritten signature of Gerry Dempsey and Bernie Dempsey. The signature is written in black ink and consists of two lines. The first line reads "Gerry Dempsey" and the second line reads "Bernie Dempsey". A horizontal line is drawn underneath the second line of the signature.

Name: Gerry and Bernie Dempsey

Date: 22 April 2026