

# OBSERVATION/SUBMISSION TO PLANNING APPLICATION

Case Reference: 324113

John & Emer Eagle

Cloran

Athenry

Galway

H65W982

To: An Coimisiún Pleanála

64 Marlborough Street

Dublin 1

D01 V902

Date: 19 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,

We, John & Emer Eagle, reside at Cloran, Athenry. which is 1.9 km from the proposed site of the peaker plant.

Our daughter, son-in-law and two grandchildren (both under 4 years old) live at Pollnagroagh, approximately 800M from the site, given this proximity they would be directly exposed to any emissions or environmental impacts arising from the development. Their children will also attend the local schools, all within 2km of the site. We find this extremely worrying regarding the potential impact to their health and wellbeing.

We are further concerned about the impact on the local roads accessing the site and also the amount of diesel stored on site raises many concerns in relation to the risk of fire or explosion at the plant once operational. It is not at all clear if the local emergency services would have the capacity, equipment or specialist training required to deal with a large-scale industrial fire or explosion.

Our daughter and her husband are actively engaged in farming, as are many relatives and neighbours in the surrounding area. We are concerned about the potential long-term environmental impacts this development

may have on agriculture and the rural community.

In addition to the concerns outlined above, we would also like to emphasise the following:

### **Cumulative Health Impacts Over Time**

We 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**

We are 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.

### **Protection of Agricultural Livelihoods**

Farmers work diligently within stringent environmental guidelines and uphold rigorous standards of environmental stewardship, fully recognising the importance of these obligations. There is concern that an industrial development of this nature—particularly one involving diesel use and long-term emissions, potentially until 2050—could introduce risks that undermine that work by affecting land quality and increasing environmental pressures. This situation presents significant challenges for farmers, who should not face penalties for problems caused by factors beyond their control. There are concerns that agricultural risks remain overlooked and the development may affect local farming long-term.

### **Cumulative Impact on Child's Development**

As parents/grandparents in the area, We are 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.

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

As people who live locally and use this road on a regular basis to visit our daughter, We are 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.

### **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.

### **Cumulative Visual Impact of Industrial Infrastructure**

It is noted that the visual impact of the proposed development appears to have been evaluated independently, rather than within the context of its overall effects. The project includes multiple elements, such as plant structures, fuel storage areas, electrical infrastructure, security fencing, lighting, and access roads, which together would create a substantial industrial presence within a rural setting. The cumulative visual impact of these components does not appear to have been fully assessed, and as a result, the overall level of visual intrusion may be significantly greater than that identified in the Environmental Impact Assessment.

### **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.

### **Ineffective Engagement and Limited Opportunity to Participate**

There are concerns that, while documentation has been made available, the approach to community engagement has not ensured meaningful or effective participation. Many residents were not directly informed of the development, and engagement appears to have relied on passive methods rather than proactive outreach. Opportunities to engage were limited and may not have reached all affected individuals, particularly those without the time, resources, or technical background to interpret the material. Effective consultation requires early, inclusive, and accessible engagement with the community, and it does not appear that this standard has been achieved in this case.

### **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**

We wish to state our strong objections to the installation of a peaker plant in the area. We fear that if this project is sanctioned, it will have a very serious detrimental and potentially catastrophic effect on Athenry and surrounding areas for generations to come.

Yours Sincerely,

John Eagle

Emer Eagle

Name: John & Emer Eagle

Date: 19 April 2026