

OBSERVATION/SUBMISSION TO PLANNING APPLICATION

Case Reference: 324113

Justin Brody
Palmerstown
Oranmore
Galway
H91A3A4

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 3.75km from the proposed site of the Cashla Peaker Plant (Athenry).

I was born and raised in Athenry with a profound respect for our cultural heritage. My mother was my history teacher and she always instilled a sense of pride in the ancient, medieval heritage town of Athenry which still has the same streetscape as it did in 1400 as well as the 13th century castle, priory and 80% of its town walls still standing.

Athenry isn't just a town in East Galway that happens to be in a convenient location for a peaker plant. The peaker plant represents a short term industrial infrastructure imposed on a world famous historical heritage landscape. Athenry is one of the best preserved medieval towns in Ireland and even Europe. We have a strong cultural identity that extends itself internationally to football and rugby stadiums, St. Patrick's Day Parades worldwide, multiple Oscar winning films, etc.,etc.

The visual impact on the "low lying" fields of Athenry will detrimentally impact both the visual and environmental context of a medieval town. Heritage is not just the walls, castle, priory, but also the

surrounding landscape gives it meaning. The peaker plant will fundamentally change the relationship of Athenry's heritage with its surrounding "low lying fields", stone walls, etc.

Athenry's location has historical significance being the crossroads of the west- no wonder all the infrastructure happens to pass through it. To choose to build this particular plant here for the reason of convenience is outrageous. It is as if the town is being punished for the fact that it is significantly located in East Galway, for the convenience of the shareholders. Any other location would require infrastructure at cost to them which is why they chose our town, ignoring its cultural significance.

I am from a family of multi generation vets and the concerns around the impact of this structure to the health and wellbeing of farm animals. All of the surrounding farms are rural but this is being encroached from each side by industry. In my research I've found that our local animals are at risk of high levels of Nitrogen Oxides, Carbom Monoxide and fine particulates by secondary formation. This can result in impacted respiratory health in livestock, fertility and productivity problems and general increase in susceptibility to diseases. The proposed development will be placed squarely in the middle of an agricultural ecosystem and will absolutely have detrimental effects on animal welfare, food production and environmental stability.

I am also a father of two small children who might have to grow up next to this peaker plant, go to school underneath it, and I might have to stop them going to a GAA game as the plant is burning and because of the lower than standard height (30m instead of regular 40m) I can't trust that they won't develop asthma (which I suffer from myself).

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.

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.

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.

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.


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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Justin Brody". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Name: Justin Brody
Date: 24 April 2026