

# OBSERVATION/SUBMISSION TO PLANNING APPLICATION

Case Reference: 324113

Leo Coffey  
33 Ard Aoibhinn  
Athenry  
Galway

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

Date: 09 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 3.18km from the proposed site of the Cashla Peaker Plant (Athenry).

My name is Leo Coffey, and together with my wife Jo Coffey, we have deep and lifelong roots in Athenry.

I was born in Athenry and have lived here all my life. Over the years, I have built strong connections within the community and have always been actively involved in local life. I also have strong ties to the farming community—my father farmed the land, and through my own business, I continue to work closely with farmers in the area.

Today, that connection has grown even stronger, as our grandchildren are now growing up in the same town that has meant so much to us.

We have two children, both of whom have settled locally and are raising their families here. We are proud grandparents to seven beautiful grandchildren. Our family is closely tied to this area—not just emotionally, but physically. Both of our children live in close proximity to the proposed peaker plant site, with our son living just over 2 kilometres away.

We have both experienced our own health concerns over the years, and we are very conscious of the importance of protecting our health and wellbeing. We do not need or want to see this further impacted by a development of this nature.

This proposed development is not an abstract issue for us—it directly affects our family, our neighbours, and the wider community we have been part of for generations. It raises serious concerns about the long-term impact on the environment, public health, and the rural character of the area.

We strongly believe that Athenry is not the right location for this type of development. Our community, our farmland, and our future generations deserve to be protected.

## **Human Health & Air Pollution**

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

The intermittent but high-intensity operation of a peaker plant, combined with periodic diesel use, can result in repeated short-term spikes in air pollution. While individual emission events may appear limited in duration, repeated exposure over time (until at least 2050) creates a cumulative health burden. Pollutants such as nitrogen oxides and fine particulate matter can worsen asthma, trigger respiratory symptoms, and contribute to long-term health impacts, including chronic respiratory disease and cardiovascular conditions. The cumulative effect of these emissions over the operational lifespan of the development has not been fully assessed, particularly in relation to long-term exposure pathways and sensitive populations living nearby.

## **Water & Groundwater**

### **Dependence on Groundwater for Domestic and Agricultural Use**

This area relies heavily on clean groundwater for domestic consumption, livestock watering, and agricultural production. The introduction of industrial activity involving fuel storage and handling creates an ongoing risk to this essential resource. Any contamination could have serious and long-lasting consequences, including impacts on drinking water quality, livestock health, and agricultural productivity. The potential for irreversible damage to groundwater resources raises serious concerns regarding the suitability of this development.

## **Farming & Agricultural Impact**

### **Protection of Agricultural Livelihoods**

Farmers are already subject to strict environmental regulation and are required to meet high standards of environmental protection. It is not acceptable that industrial development, including diesel use and associated emissions (until at least 2050), could introduce environmental risks that undermine compliance, damage land quality, or threaten farming livelihoods. Farmers should not be placed in a position where they are penalised for environmental impacts arising from activities outside their control.

## **Children & Health**

### **Exposure During Daily Activities and School Times**

Children living or attending school near the site may be exposed to elevated air pollution during peak operation periods, which may coincide with times when children are outdoors, including school drop-off, break times, and after-school activities. During physical activity, children breathe more rapidly, increasing their

intake of pollutants. This raises concerns about repeated exposure to harmful emissions during critical stages of development.

## **Local Roads, Safety & Schools**

### **Inadequate Assessment of Traffic Impacts**

The placement of a site entrance at this hazardous location on the L3103 introduces significant and clearly identifiable safety risks, including restricted road width, lack of a hard shoulder, and severely limited visibility due to blind dips and corners. Despite these known constraints, the Environmental Impact Assessment does not adequately assess the safety implications of this access point.

The cumulative impact of construction traffic, operational traffic, and fuel deliveries has not been fully assessed. This includes the interaction of heavy goods vehicles with existing rural traffic, school-related movements, and agricultural use. The absence of a detailed and robust traffic safety assessment creates uncertainty regarding whether the local road network can safely accommodate the proposed development.

### **Fire Safety & Major Accident Hazards**

#### **Proximity and Worst-Case Scenario Risks**

The proposed site is in proximity to residential dwellings, agricultural lands, and local infrastructure. In this context, even a low-probability but high-impact event could result in serious consequences for public safety, property, and rural economic activity. The Environmental Impact Assessment does not clearly demonstrate that worst-case scenarios, including fire spread, explosion impact zones, and fuel ignition events, have been fully assessed. Without this information, the true scale and severity of potential impacts remain uncertain.

### **Visual Impact & Landscape**

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

The development will be visible from surrounding homes, roads, and farmland, resulting in a permanent change to the visual environment. This may affect residential amenity, enjoyment of the area, and the overall character of the landscape. Given the long operational lifespan of the development (until at least 2050), these visual impacts will be enduring and cannot be easily mitigated. The introduction of industrial lighting, structures, and activity into a rural setting represents a long-term change that should be carefully considered.

### **Planning & Assessment**

#### **Complexity of EIAR and Barriers to Public Understanding**

While the development is presented within a single Environmental Impact Assessment Report, the scale, volume, and complexity of the documentation make it extremely difficult for the public to understand the project in its entirety. The level of technical detail, combined with the structure of the documentation, creates a barrier to meaningful engagement. Although not formally divided across separate EIARs, the practical effect is like fragmentation, as the public cannot easily assess cumulative impacts across all aspects of the development. This raises concerns regarding transparency and accessibility in the planning process.

#### **Diesel Use Not Fully Assessed or Limited**

Diesel use is not limited to emergency scenarios and may include routine testing and operational requirements. This introduces additional emissions, odours, and environmental risks that have not been fully

assessed in the Environmental Impact Assessment. The frequency and impact of diesel use remain unclear, creating uncertainty regarding the overall environmental impact of the development.

### **Protection of Community, Health, and Environment**

This proposal raises real and valid concerns for people, public health, agriculture, and the local environment. The complexity of the documentation and limitations in community engagement have made it difficult for the public to fully participate in the decision-making process. Communities should not be exposed to uncertain and potentially significant environmental impacts. I strongly urge that planning permission is not granted.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leo Coffey". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style. The first name "Leo" is on the left, and "Coffey" is on the right, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of "Coffey" that loops back under the name.

Name: Leo Coffey  
Date: 09 April 2026