OBSERVATION/SUBMISSION TO PLANNING APPLICATION

Case Reference: 324113

Liam & Lisa Rockall

Redwoods

Lisheenkyle East

Oranmore

Galway

H91X2Y2

To: An Coimisiún Pleanála

64 Marlborough Street

Dublin 1

D01 V902

Date: 23 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 2.25km from the proposed site of the Cashla Peaker Plant (Athenry).

As a parent raising children in this area, I am deeply concerned about the impact of this development on air quality. Any increase in emissions from fossil fuel combustion presents an unnecessary health risk, particularly to young children and other vulnerable residents, and is wholly inappropriate in our community, where families live and grow.

The development would also place undue pressure on local rural roads through increased heavy vehicle traffic during construction and operation. These roads are not designed for such use, creating clear safety risks for residents, pedestrians, cyclists, and children, while undermining the safe and peaceful character of our area.

In addition, the industrial scale of the proposed plant would be entirely out of keeping with the rural landscape. Its visual intrusion would permanently alter the character and amenity of the community. Noise

associated with both construction and operation further compounds these concerns, with the potential to disrupt family life, rest, and enjoyment of homes, particularly during peak operational periods.

More fundamentally, I strongly oppose the principle of approving new fossil when climate action and decarbonisation should be guiding all planning decisions. While peaker plants are often framed as supporting renewable energy, they nonetheless rely on the continued burning of fossil fuels, producing emissions that are incompatible with long term climate goals and

I fully support the expansion of renewable energy and a resilient electricity grid, but this should be achieved by accelerating investment in genuinely clean solutions such as energy storage, demand management, grid upgrades, and additional renewable capacity. Approving fossil fuel peaker plants risks diverting resources away from these alternatives while embedding carbon intensive infrastructu to come.

Allowing developments of this nature sends the wrong signal at a critical moment in the energy transition. Rather than locking communities into outdated and polluting technologies, planning decisions should actively support innovations that align with national climate commitments, protect local environments, and reflect the expectations of residents who support a clean, sustainable energy future.

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.

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.

Increased Heavy Traffic and Diesel Transport Risks

As someone who lives locally and uses this road, I am 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.

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.

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

Due to the concerns mentioned—such as uncertainty about how often operations will occur, overall environmental impacts, and risks related to diesel use—this project is not viewed as proper or sustainable development. There has also been insufficient consideration of the possibility that the actual impacts could be greater than those evaluated. Therefore, we respectfully ask that approval for this application be refused.

Yours Sincerely,

Name: Liam & Lisa Rockall
Date: 23 April 2026