

A chara,

I would like to make a submission in respect of the proposed open-cycle gas turbine power plant at Pollnagroagh and Rathmorrissy, Athenry, Co. Galway (SID case ref: 324113).

As a public representative in the area, I have received considerable feedback from constituents in relation to this proposed development which I intend to outline in this submission.

I fully understand and support the need for energy security within the State and would like to see this done in an appropriate and sustainable way.

1. A similar type of development was refused planning permission only a short distance away from this proposed site in 2009. The decision was made on the basis of public health and other concerns which also apply to this current development. I ask An Comisiún to demonstrate how this development differs from the previous one refused permission, and why the concerns in relation to that development do not apply to the current one.
2. There are concerns in relation to public health and air quality, given this development's proximity to homes, workplaces and schools. I ask that an independent assessment is carried out on this matter.
3. Many constituents have serious concerns about the impact on road traffic and safety during construction and the operational phase on both the L3103 and M6. There has been serious disruption caused during construction of nearby energy developments. There are concerns that road closures and diversions will result in similar disruption for extended periods in relation to this project, particularly in relation to agriculture. Abnormal loads may also result in long-term damage to road structures. While during the operational phase, there will be significantly increased numbers of HGVs in the area. This will put pressure on the road infrastructure and result in significant safety concerns for local road users.
4. There are concerns about new fossil fuel infrastructure being developed in the area. There are a lack of statutory planning guidelines in this area, while Statewide targets in terms of this type of development have already been reached. I ask An Comisiún to take this into account, and to demonstrate whether this is an appropriate site given the absence of specific planning guidelines.
5. Many other concerns have been raised with me in relation to visual impact, industrialization of a rural community, environmental and ecology concerns among many other issues.

This is a major development which will have long-lasting implications for this rural community. I understand that a large number of submissions have been made by members of the community. I ask that An Comisiún carefully considers the content of all submissions and the potential impact on the local community during the assessment of this application.

Is mise le meas,

Louis O'Hara TD

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