OBSERVATION/SUBMISSION TO PLANNING APPLICATION

Case Reference: 324113

Lynn Beattie

74 The Glade

Athenry

Galway

To: An Coimisiún Pleanála

64 Marlborough Street

Dublin 1

D01 V902

Date: 10 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 2.80km from the proposed site of the Cashla Peaker Plant (Athenry).

My name is Lynn Beattie, and I live in Athenry with my husband, Brian McGroarty. We have two daughters, aged 25 and 22, both of whom live at home and intend to remain living in Athenry long-term.
Athenry is a designated heritage town, rich in historical significance and cultural value. We are deeply concerned that any industrial development of this nature poses a risk not only to public health but also to the preservation and character of our town.
Our family has specific health concerns that make us particularly vulnerable to changes in air quality. I suffer from sleep apnoea, and one of our daughters has asthma. These conditions make us highly sensitive to air pollution, both indoors and outdoors. We use an air-to-water heating system, and we are concerned that any deterioration in outdoor air quality could impact the air within our home.
In addition, our daughter is very active and plays hockey regularly in Moonbaun. During exercise, breathing rates increase significantly, raising serious concerns about the potential impact of any air pollution on her health and wellbeing.
My husband is an avid cyclist and regularly travels on local country roads. We are very concerned that any increase in traffic associated with this development, including heavy vehicles, would significantly impact road

safety, particularly for vulnerable road users such as cyclists. Narrow rural roads are already hazardous, and additional traffic would increase the risk of accidents.
We are also extremely concerned about safety risks, including the potential risk of explosion or industrial accidents, which could have devastating consequences for nearby homes, residents, and the wider community.
Furthermore, we are worried about the potential for water contamination, which could affect local water supplies, agriculture, and the surrounding environment. Clean water is essential for both public health and the sustainability of our local area.
Given our family's health issues, our daughters' long-term future in Athenry, and the importance of protecting both the community and the heritage of the town, we strongly oppose any development that poses risks to air quality, public safety, road safety, water, and the local environment.

Human Health & Air Pollution

Public Health Protection

Air pollution from a peaker plant can affect human health, particularly during peak operation periods when emissions are highest. The inclusion of diesel use introduces additional pollutants that are widely recognised as harmful and capable of long-range transport and accumulation in the environment. Given the uncertainty around operational frequency, emission levels, and long-term exposure patterns (until at least 2050), a precautionary approach should be applied to protect public health. In the absence of clear and robust evidence demonstrating that no significant harm will occur, the potential risks to human health should be given significant weight in planning decisions.

Water & Groundwater

Risk of Groundwater Contamination from Fuel Storage and Handling

A peaker plant requires the storage and handling of fuels such as diesel, lubricating oils, and other chemical substances, all of which present potential contamination risks. These substances may enter the ground through leaks, spills, or contaminated surface runoff, particularly over the long operational lifespan of the facility (until at least 2050). Even minor but repeated incidents can lead to the gradual accumulation of pollutants in soil and groundwater. Once groundwater contamination occurs, it is extremely difficult and costly to remediate, and impacts can persist for decades. This raises serious concerns under Directive 2000/60/EC, which requires the protection of water bodies and the prevention of deterioration in water quality.

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

Unsuitability of Rural Road Network

The proposed site entrance is located on an exceptionally dangerous section of the L3103. Establishing an access point at this specific location introduces an unacceptable level of risk due to several compounding hazards:

- Severely Restricted Width: The road is currently too narrow to safely permit two Heavy Goods Vehicles to pass simultaneously.
- Absence of a Hard Shoulder: There is no safe refuge or margin for error for manoeuvring vehicles.
- Critically Poor Visibility: The immediate area is affected by blind dips and blind corners, severely compromising driver sightlines.

These immediate dangers constitute a severe threat to public safety and require urgent and mandatory remediation.

In addition to these existing hazards, local roads are not designed to accommodate sustained industrial traffic. The interaction between heavy goods vehicles, farm machinery, and everyday residential traffic creates a complex and potentially dangerous road environment. The introduction of additional industrial traffic, including diesel deliveries and construction vehicles, further compounds these risks.

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

Landscape Character and Policy Conflict

The proposed development represents a significant industrial intrusion into a rural landscape characterised by agricultural land use and dispersed residential development. The scale, height, and industrial nature of the plant, including associated infrastructure such as buildings, stacks, lighting, and fuel storage, will fundamentally alter the character of the area. This type of development does not appear consistent with the existing landscape or its capacity to absorb such change. This raises concerns under Policies LCM1, LCM2 and LCM3 of the Galway County Development Plan, which require the protection of landscape character, sensitivity, and capacity, and seek to ensure that development is appropriate to its setting.

Climate Impact

Availability of Cleaner Alternatives

Cleaner and more sustainable alternatives to fossil fuel generation are available, including renewable energy,

energy storage, demand response, and grid flexibility measures. The development of new gas infrastructure may reduce the urgency to deploy these solutions. In the context of the climate crisis, priority should be given to low-carbon alternatives rather than extending reliance on fossil fuels.

Community Engagement

Lack of Clear, Accessible, and Effective Communication

There appears to have been insufficient and ineffective community engagement in relation to this project. Many residents did not receive any direct communication or notification regarding the development. While some individuals report receiving a flyer or attending an information event, the material provided was highly technical and difficult to understand without specialist knowledge. This significantly limits meaningful participation. Effective consultation requires that information is accessible, clearly explained, and actively communicated to all affected members of the community. In this case, the level of detail and technical complexity of the documentation creates a barrier to understanding, meaning that many people are unable to fully assess the potential impacts of the development.

Planning & Assessment

Absence of Worst-Case Scenario Assessment

The Environmental Impact Assessment relies on assumed or typical operational scenarios rather than assessing worst-case conditions. A peaker plant operates in response to electricity demand, meaning the frequency, duration, and intensity of operation cannot be guaranteed. This includes the use of diesel during start-up, testing, or operational periods. As a result, actual emissions and environmental impacts may be significantly greater than those modelled. Without a robust worst-case assessment, it cannot be concluded that significant adverse environmental effects will not occur. This creates a fundamental gap in the assessment and undermines its reliability.

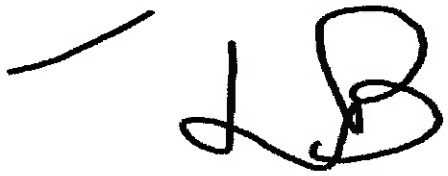
Operational Uncertainty and Lack of Enforceable Limits

There is no clear or enforceable limit on how often or how long the plant will operate. As a demand-led facility, operation may be more frequent or prolonged than assumed in the Environmental Impact Assessment. This includes diesel use during start-up and operation. If this occurs, impacts such as emissions, noise, and traffic may be significantly greater than predicted. This uncertainty raises concerns regarding the accuracy of the assessment.

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,



Name: Lynn Beattie
Date: 10 April 2026