

OBSERVATION/SUBMISSION TO PLANNING APPLICATION

Case Reference: 324113

Madelyn Brody
Prospect House
Athenry
Galway
H65AP59

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 3.14km from the proposed site of the Cashla Peaker Plant (Athenry).

My Name is Madelyn Brody, I'm a history teacher in the Presentation College, Athenry, a member of the AthenryTown team and a founder Director of Athenry Heritage Centre. I have been involved in trying to preserve the Heritage Town of Athenry from various attempts to destroy it since 1990 and I am totally horrified with the proposal to build an enormous, grotesque, dirty looking tower emitting noxious fumes in the countryside immediately overlooking the precious hinterland of our medieval town.

Athenry Heritage town is a member of the Heritage Towns of Ireland and the Walled towns of Europe. Other European members of the Walled Towns of Europe form the cherished treasure of their country, the towns which are known far and wide for their unique heritage. These towns are protected by the government and all their organisations. It is inconceivable that the government of Ireland would allow this monstrosity to be built adjacent to our heritage town which has been identified as a magnet to attract tourists to the best preserved medieval town in Ireland.

Athenry medieval streetscape is the same now as it was in the year 1400. It boasts one of the finest 13th century castles in Ireland, a spectacular medieval priory and medieval collegiate church in whose ruins is a

19th century Protestant church which houses the Athenry Heritage Centre - a successful local enterprise which will celebrate its 25th anniversary next month. The walls of Athenry are remarkable in Europe being 80% still intact without significant rebuilding. These walls were surrounded by deep moats - the Town Team main projects involve a walk around the walls looking out over the surrounding countryside. This project could hardly be taken seriously if this enormous erection is within view and smell of the town. As you know the Town team is a government initiative to drive the rejuvenation of rural towns where 12 chosen residents work closely with their local authorities to create 'vibrant, sustainable and attractive living and working spaces'. Hopefully these sustainable, vibrant spaces will not be polluted by the emissions emanating from this proposed abomination.

Landscape Character and Policy Conflict

There are serious concerns that the proposed development would represent 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 buildings, stacks, lighting, and fuel storage—would fundamentally alter the character of the area, introducing a visually dominant feature into what is currently a quiet rural setting. This type of development does not appear consistent with the existing landscape, nor does the area have the capacity to absorb such change without significant adverse effects. These concerns are particularly relevant in the context of the Galway County Development Plan, specifically Policies LCM1, LCM2, and LCM3, which seek to protect landscape character, recognise landscape sensitivity, and ensure that development is appropriate to its setting.

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.

Ineffective Engagement and Limited Opportunity to Participate

There are concerns that, while documentation has been made available, the approach to community engagement has not ensured meaningful or effective participation. Many residents were not directly informed of the development, and engagement appears to have relied on passive methods rather than proactive outreach. Opportunities to engage were limited and may not have reached all affected individuals, particularly those without the time, resources, or technical background to interpret the material. Effective consultation requires early, inclusive, and accessible engagement with the community, and it does not appear that this standard has been achieved in this case.

Failure to Properly Assess Cumulative and Long-Term Impacts

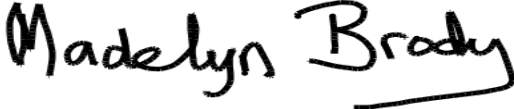
There are concerns that the Environmental Impact Assessment does not adequately assess cumulative impacts, including the combined effects of emissions, noise, traffic, diesel use, and ongoing environmental disturbance over time. These impacts may interact and intensify, particularly during peak operational periods, yet this interaction has not been fully examined. The long-term nature of the development, potentially extending to at least 2050, further increases the importance of understanding these cumulative effects.

Without a comprehensive assessment, it is difficult to fully understand the overall environmental burden of the project, and this represents a significant gap in the evaluation.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Madelyn Brody". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underlining the name.

Name: Madelyn Brody

Date: 24 April 2026