

OBSERVATION/SUBMISSION TO PLANNING APPLICATION

Case Reference: 324113

Marianne Brady

Moanbaun

Athenry

Galway

H65 N568

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 2.18km from the proposed site of the Cashla Peaker Plant (Athenry).

We are parents of four young children. As we know, Peaker plants primarily burn gas releasing nitrogen dioxides. The world health organisation state that even short term exposure to this can trigger paediatric athsma attacks (research indicates a 10% increase in nitrogen oxidates corelates with a significant rise in hospital admissions for children with respiratory issues. Further even 'clean' gas plants emit fine particulate matter. As children's lungs are small, they breathe in more air per kilogram of body weight than adults and they are more susceptible . These particles are so small that they enter the bloodstream. According to the Lancet Planetary Health, EVEN LEVELS BELOW EU LEGAL LIMITS CAN IMPAIR LUNG FUNCTION in school aged children. We have no idea of the levels of how much over EU limits the intended/ proposed particulate matter will be immetd. When my children are getting up/ walking to school and playing outside they will be exposed to the slugs of high pollutants which will occur during the start up of the peaker plant... we are only 2 km away. My children should not be the ones to pay with their health. I am aware from my research that ultrafine particles cross the blood brain barrier and this will affect the neurodevelopment development of my children and future generations. The peaker plant will be loud and noise above 40desibels

is linked with higher cortisol and sleep disturbance/ work and school performance. Long term exposure to even the small amounts of Formaldehyde and Volatile Organic Compounds is linked with cancer. The International Agency for Research on Cancer backs up my concerns here. If the developer cannot guarantee ZERO impact on my family's health (Marianne, Martin, Meabh, Ailbhe, Noelle & Mattie) you should lean towards caution and not grant planning. EU and Irish Environmental Law calls for FULL and SCIENTIFIC CERTAINTY on these matters. Using the Irish EPA Air quality maps we are currently in zone C/D and should not have additional pollutant loading. This peaker plant is ridiculous and incongruent with the Climate Action Plan 2025. We cannot allow this to go ahead

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.

Exposure During Daily Activities and School Times

As a parent in the area, I am concerned that children living nearby or attending local schools will be exposed to higher levels of air pollution when the plant is operating at peak times, particularly when they are outdoors during school drop-off, break times, and after-school activities. During physical activity, children breathe more rapidly, increasing their intake of pollutants and making them more vulnerable to harmful effects. What is especially worrying is the potential for repeated exposure during key stages of development, which could have lasting impacts on their health and wellbeing. Overall, this raises serious concerns as to whether these risks have been fully considered.

Cumulative Impact on Child's Development

As a parent in the area, I am concerned about the impact of fine particulate matter over time. These pollutants can travel long distances and accumulate, meaning children may be exposed not only during peak pollution events but also through ongoing low-level exposure. The cumulative effect of this is particularly worrying, as repeated exposure during key stages of growth and development could have lasting impacts on lung development and overall health. From a community perspective, this raises serious concerns about the long-term safety of this development for children, and it is not clear that these cumulative impacts have been fully considered.

Need for Precaution Due to Uncertainty

There is significant concern regarding the insufficient assessment of long-term health impacts on children, particularly with respect to repeated exposure associated with intermittent plant operation and diesel utilisation. Since children are especially susceptible to air pollution, uncertainty surrounding these effects warrants scrutiny. It is inadequate to presume minimal risk without substantial, transparent evidence. Given these circumstances, it is recommended that a precautionary approach be adopted to prioritise the health and wellbeing of children and to ensure that all potential risks are thoroughly evaluated and mitigated.

Availability of Cleaner Alternatives

Although cleaner and more sustainable alternatives to fossil fuels—such as renewable energy, energy storage, demand response, and grid flexibility measures—are available, building new gas infrastructure may lessen the urgency to invest in these solutions. Given the climate crisis, emphasis should be placed on low-carbon and renewable options instead of furthering dependence on fossil fuels; this proposal could delay the shift toward a more sustainable 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

This proposal presents important concerns regarding people, public health, agriculture, and the surrounding environment. Because the documentation is complex and community engagement has been limited, many individuals have found it challenging to take part in the decision-making process. Communities should not face uncertain or potentially substantial environmental risks. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that planning permission be refused.

Yours Sincerely,

Marianne
MARTIN
Aislinne Meabh
Nastie Noelle

Name: Marianne Brady

Date: 24 April 2026