

# OBSERVATION/SUBMISSION TO PLANNING APPLICATION

Case Reference: 324113

Maureen O'Connor

Cashla

Athenry

Galway

H65CP49

To: An Coimisiún Pleanála

64 Marlborough Street

Dublin 1

D01 V902

Date: 17 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,

I Maureen O'Connor a resident of Cashla + Athenry for 41 year's am putting foward my grievous concerns about this proposed Peaker Plant 4.33 km from my home. I also work in Lisheenkyle N.S. which I have more serious concerns for too. These are the family members within my household are:

Maureen O'Connor:

Age : 58

Conditions : Severe Asthmatic / Bronchitis

3 inhalers + 1 tablet daily

Address: Cashla, Athenry, Galway H65CP49 ( homeowner )

Work : Lisheenkyle N.S. , Oranmore, Galway H91YR20

Chloe Marachado/ OConnor ( daughter )

Age : 31

Conditions: Asthmatic / 1 inhaler daily

Address : Cashla , Athenry, Galway H65CP49 ( mobile on site )

Morocho Marachado/ OConnor ( son in law )  
Age : 34  
Conditions: Asthmatic / 1 inhaler  
Diabetic  
Address : Cashla, Athenry, Galway H65 CP49 ( mobile on site )

Paudraig Marachado / OConnor ( grandson )  
Age : 14 months old baby  
Conditions: 0 ( as of yet if the peaker plant does not go ahead )  
Address : Cashla, Athenry, Galway H65CP49 ( mobile on site )

Hannah OConnor ( daughter )  
Age : 29  
Conditions: Asthmatic / 1 inhaler  
Glaucoma / 2 different drops + 1 tablet  
Address : Cashla, Athenry, Galway H65CP49 ( lives in family home )

Micaela Snapp / OConnor ( daughter in law )  
Age : 29  
Conditions: Asthmatic / 3 inhalers  
Address : Cashla, Athenry, Galway H65CP49 ( live in family home )

I have deep concerns for our future health living 4.33 km near the plant if built :

High concentration of pollutants  
Dirtiest source of energy in the EU  
Respiratory issues  
Inflammation of airways  
Asthma attacks  
Bronchitis  
Cardiovascular diseases  
Heart attacks + strokes  
Reproductive harm  
Neurological concerns of increase in Alzheimer's  
Weakening of immune system

A huge Health + Safety risk to ALL living in proximity to said plant.

The Climate + Policy Contridictions considering were to be 51% reduction of greenhouse gases yet their a proposal to build this...

The impact it will make on the local areas surrounding this : noise, traffic, pollution + rural life.

The impact of 32 staff members + 250 children @ Lisheenkyle N.S. Which includes their Montessori, morning + afterschool clubs. The school day is 7:50 to 5:30 of continually exposure to all these lives if built.....

### **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.

### **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.

### **School Safety and Peak-Time Risks**

As someone who lives locally and extensively uses this road, I am concerned about the proposed location of the site entrance on the L3103. This section of road is already extremely dangerous, as it is narrow, has no hard shoulder, and does not provide sufficient space for two heavy goods vehicles to pass safely. Visibility is also poor due to blind dips and sharp bends, meaning drivers often cannot see oncoming traffic in time, and introducing a site entrance at this location would significantly increase the risk to all road users.

There are strong concerns that adding traffic—particularly large vehicles—would worsen these existing hazards, especially near homes and schools during busy periods such as morning and afternoon times. The interaction between heavy goods vehicles, farm machinery, and everyday local traffic creates a higher risk of accidents, particularly for children and other vulnerable road users. Overall, this is not a suitable location for this level of traffic, and the associated safety risks for the community are a critical concern.

### **Conflict with National and EU Climate Targets**

There are serious concerns regarding Ireland's legally binding obligations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, as well as wider EU climate frameworks. The continued development of gas-fired generation, including peaker plants, will result in additional carbon dioxide emissions over the lifetime of the project, raising questions about alignment with national carbon budgets and emissions reduction targets. In this context, there is concern that the proposal may undermine the State's ability to meet its climate commitments and transition to a low-carbon energy system.

### **Underestimation of Operational Emissions**

There are concerns that the Environmental Impact Assessment may underestimate the emissions associated

with the proposed development by relying on assumed operating patterns. As a demand-led facility, the plant may operate more frequently or for longer periods than predicted, particularly during times of pressure on the energy system. This creates uncertainty around the total level of greenhouse gas emissions over the lifetime of the project and raises concerns that the full climate impact of the development has not been adequately assessed.

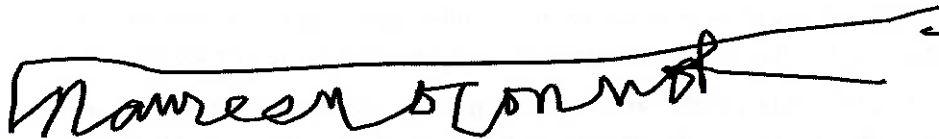
### **Lack of Worst-Case Assessment**

The Environmental Impact Assessment bases its findings on expected operating scenarios instead of evaluating the worst-case possibilities. Because the plant's operation will depend on electricity demand, it's unclear how often or how intensely it might run. This uncertainty also applies to diesel usage, which could produce higher emissions than those estimated. Without a thorough assessment of the most severe potential impacts, it is impossible to guarantee that major environmental effects will not happen.

### **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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maureen O'Connor". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line that spans the width of the signature.

Name: Maureen O'Connor

Date: 17 April 2026