

# OBSERVATION/SUBMISSION TO PLANNING APPLICATION

Case Reference: 324113

Monica Megraw  
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Galway  
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To: An Coimisiún Pleanála  
64 Marlborough Street  
Dublin 1  
D01 V902

Date: 16 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 3.48km from the proposed site of the Cashla Peaker Plant (Athenry).

I made a deliberate decision to move from the city to Athenry 3 year ago for a number of important reasons, one of which was to reduce my exposure to air pollution. I have underlying health issues that are adversely affected by poor air quality, and living in a less urban, less polluted environment was an important factor in my decision to relocate here. This move was made with the expectation that the surrounding environment would support and protect my health and quality of life.

## **Human Health & Air Pollution**

### **Cumulative Health Impacts Over Time**

The intermittent but high-intensity operation of a peaker plant, combined with periodic diesel use, can result in repeated short-term spikes in air pollution. While individual emission events may appear limited in duration,

repeated exposure over time (until at least 2050) creates a cumulative health burden. Pollutants such as nitrogen oxides and fine particulate matter can worsen asthma, trigger respiratory symptoms, and contribute to long-term health impacts, including chronic respiratory disease and cardiovascular conditions. The cumulative effect of these emissions over the operational lifespan of the development has not been fully assessed, particularly in relation to long-term exposure pathways and sensitive populations living nearby.

### **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.

### **Climate Impact**

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

Ireland has legally binding obligations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 and 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. This raises concerns regarding consistency with national carbon budgets and the State's ability to meet its climate targets.

#### **Underestimation of Operational Emissions**

The Environmental Impact Assessment may underestimate emissions associated with the development by relying on assumed operational patterns. As a demand-led facility, the plant may operate more frequently or for longer periods than predicted, particularly during periods of energy system stress. This creates uncertainty regarding total greenhouse gas emissions over time and raises concerns that the climate impact of the development has not been fully assessed.

#### **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.

### **Conclusion**

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Monica Megraw". The letters are cursive and fluid, with the first name "Monica" and the last name "Megraw" written in a single continuous line.

Name: Monica Megraw  
Date: 16 April 2026