

# OBSERVATION/SUBMISSION TO PLANNING APPLICATION

Case Reference: 324113

Orla Gannon  
Lisheenkyle East  
Athenry  
Galway  
H65TK31

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

Date: 23 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 2.35km from the proposed site of the Cashla Peaker Plant (Athenry).

I am writing to formally object to the proposed development of a peaker gas plant with associated diesel generators in close proximity to my home and the surrounding community.

I live nearby with my three young children, all of whom are at a particularly vulnerable stage of development. There is also a local school within the immediate area, meaning a significant number of children would be regularly exposed to the potential impacts of this development. Children's health is paramount and this plant would directly be putting them at risk.

My primary concern relates to the health implications of emissions from both gas-fired generation and, in particular, diesel generators. Diesel exhaust is widely recognised as a source of harmful air pollutants, including nitrogen oxides and particulate matter, which are known to negatively affect respiratory health. The prospect of introducing such emissions so close to homes and a school raises serious concerns about air quality and the long-term wellbeing of children in this community.

In addition to air pollution, I am deeply concerned about noise impacts. Peaker plants and diesel generators can produce intermittent but significant noise, especially during peak demand periods. This could disrupt sleep patterns, reduce quality of life, and create a stressful environment for families, particularly for young children which I have.

There are also broader concerns about safety and environmental risk. The storage and use of diesel fuel introduces the potential for spills, odours, and other hazards. The siting of such infrastructure in a residential area appears inappropriate given these risks.

From a planning perspective, I believe this proposal is incompatible with the character of the area, which is primarily residential and includes essential community infrastructure such as a school. Developments of this nature should be located at a sufficient distance from homes and places where children gather.

I would ask the planning authority to consider the cumulative and long-term impact of approving such a development in a growing residential community. Decisions made now will shape the health and quality of life of residents for years to come.

### **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.

### **Increased Heavy Traffic and Diesel Transport Risks**

As someone who lives locally and uses this road, I am concerned about road safety in relation to the proposed entrance on the L3103. This stretch of road is already extremely narrow, with no hard shoulder, making it difficult for two heavy goods vehicles to pass safely and leaving no margin for error. Visibility is also poor due to blind dips and sharp bends, meaning drivers often cannot see oncoming traffic in time. The proposed development would increase traffic levels, including heavy goods vehicles, construction traffic, and fuel deliveries such as diesel tankers, all of which require space and clear sightlines that this road does not provide.

Given that these rural roads are used by residents, farm machinery, and school-related traffic, the addition of significant industrial traffic would increase the risk of accidents and create a more hazardous environment. Overall, there is strong concern that the existing road infrastructure is not suitable for this level of traffic and that the associated safety risks have not been adequately addressed.

### **Risk of Fire and Explosion from Fuel Storage**

As someone living in the area, I am very concerned about the safety risks associated with this proposed development. The project involves the storage, handling, and use of highly flammable fuels such as natural gas and diesel, which carry an inherent risk of fire or explosion. In the event of equipment malfunctions,

leaks, or operational challenges, these substances may pose an ignition risk, potentially resulting in significant incidents. Considering the intermittent yet high-intensity operation of a peaker plant, the likelihood of such occurrences warrants careful consideration.

The potential consequences are particularly worrying, as any incident could have serious impacts on nearby homes, residents, farmland, and livestock. This raises significant concerns about whether the risks have been fully assessed and whether this location is appropriate for a development of this nature.

### **Failure to Meet Aarhus Convention Standards**

There are concerns that the consultation process for this development does not meet the standards set out under the Aarhus Convention, which provides for the public's right to access environmental information and to participate effectively in environmental decision-making. This requires not only that information is made available, but that it is understandable, accessible, and provided in a timely manner. In this case, the complexity of the Environmental Impact Assessment documentation, combined with limited direct communication, appears to have restricted meaningful public participation. This raises serious concerns regarding transparency, accessibility, and the overall effectiveness of public engagement in the decision-making process.

### **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,

Orla  
Gannon

Name: Orla Gannon

Date: 23 April 2026