

OBSERVATION/SUBMISSION TO PLANNING APPLICATION

Case Reference: 324113

Sarah Curran
Mirah
Turloughmore
Galway
H65 YW13

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 name is Sarah Curran, and I wish to formally object to the proposed Peaker plant development near Athenry. I grew up approximately 880 metres from the proposed site and now reside in a neighbouring village just 8.75 km away. This is not just an area on a map to me — it is my home place, where I was raised and where my family still live. My children are cared for three days a week in my family home, located within 880 metres of the proposed development. My nephews live even closer and would be directly exposed to the impacts of this plant on a continuous basis. I want to acknowledge that members of my own extended family have been involved in granting access to this site. This makes my objection all the more difficult and personal. However, my responsibility as a parent and as someone deeply connected to this place compels me to speak out. I cannot stand over a development that I genuinely believe poses a risk to the health, safety, and future of our children and our community.

My primary concern relates to the potential impact on public health. The proximity of this industrial facility to family homes raises serious concerns regarding air quality, emissions, and long-term exposure to pollutants. As a mother, the thought of my children spending time so close to a plant of this nature is deeply worrying. Children and vulnerable individuals are particularly at risk, and there is growing evidence linking emissions from fossil-fuel-based energy infrastructure to respiratory conditions and other health issues.

Beyond health, this development represents a profound loss of the quality of life that defined my own childhood. We grew up with the freedom to roam fields, cycle quiet roads, and enjoy a safe rural environment. I fear that this will no longer be possible for my children, nieces, and nephews. The presence of a large industrial facility will fundamentally change the character of the area and the way families can live within it.

I also have serious concerns regarding road safety and infrastructure. The local road network is narrow, winding, and already under pressure. It is not suitable for the level of heavy construction traffic and ongoing vehicle movement that this development would bring. Previous works in the area led to increased traffic and accidents, and I am very concerned that this will be repeated, placing families and children at risk and removing the ability for them to safely walk or cycle these roads. From an environmental perspective, I struggle to understand why such a development is being considered at a time when Ireland is striving to move toward cleaner, renewable energy. This proposal feels at odds with the need to protect both our environment and public health for future generations. This is not just a planning matter for me — it is about the place where I grew up, where my family still live, and where my children are now spending their early years. It is about their safety, their health, and their ability to experience the same kind of upbringing that I was fortunate to have. I have outlined below my other concerns in relation to the peaker plant looking at the wider community of my neighbours, schools, business' and our vulnerable people in the community.

Human Health & Air Pollution

Cumulative Health Impacts Over Time

I have serious concerns about how this proposed peaker plant would operate over time. Although it would run intermittently, it would do so at extremely high intensity, and the potential use of diesel adds to these concerns, as it could result in repeated short-term spikes in air pollution. While individual emission events may be brief, the fact that they could occur repeatedly over many years—potentially up to 2050—raises concerns about ongoing exposure and cumulative health impacts.

Pollutants such as nitrogen oxides and fine particulate matter are known to worsen asthma, trigger respiratory symptoms, and contribute to long-term conditions including chronic respiratory and cardiovascular disease. This is particularly concerning for nearby residents my nephews and their family, my parents and myself and my family and those with existing health conditions. There is still uncertainty regarding whether the lasting and cumulative effects of these emissions have been fully studied, which leads to real concerns that continued exposure during the development's lifetime could affect public health and wellbeing in the future.

Farming & Agricultural Impact

Protection of Agricultural Livelihoods

Farmers like my brother work diligently within stringent environmental guidelines and uphold rigorous standards of environmental stewardship, fully recognising the importance of these obligations. There is concern that an industrial development of this nature—particularly one involving diesel use and long-term emissions, potentially until 2050—could introduce risks that undermine that work by affecting land quality and increasing environmental pressures. This situation presents significant challenges for farmers, who should not face penalties for problems caused by factors beyond their control. There are concerns that agricultural risks remain overlooked and the development may affect local farming long-term.

Children & Health

Cumulative Impact on Child's Development

As a parent, a daughter and an aunt in the local 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.

Fire Safety & Major Accident Hazards

Major Accident Hazard and Regulatory Concerns

I am concerned about the potential for major accidents associated with this proposed development. A gas-fired peaker plant, combined with on-site fuel storage, introduces real risks, including fire, explosion, and the release of fuel. According to the requirements of the Seveso III Directive, any development involving hazardous substances must present clear evidence that relevant risks have been appropriately identified, assessed, and minimized. In this instance, it appears that full compliance may not have been achieved. Locally, there is concern regarding whether the probability and impact of serious incidents have been comprehensively evaluated or clearly demonstrated, which raises ongoing questions about the adequacy of risk management and the safety of nearby residents.

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.

Precautionary Refusal Based on Uncertainty and Risk

The proposal raises important concerns about environmental protection, public health, agriculture, road safety, and community welfare. Due to uncertainties regarding how often operations would occur, diesel usage, and overall impacts, this development cannot be considered acceptable. A thorough and cautious assessment is needed to ensure that significant environmental effects are avoided, but such an evaluation has not been conducted.

For all of these reasons above, I strongly object to this proposed development and respectfully request that planning permission be refused.

Yours Sincerely,



[Signed electronically]

Name: Sarah Curran

Date: 24 April 2026