

OBSERVATION/SUBMISSION TO PLANNING APPLICATION

Case Reference: 324113

Sean & Mary Feeney

Grange

Athenry

Galway

H65AY98

To: An Coimisiún Pleanála

64 Marlborough Street

Dublin 1

D01 V902

Date: 19 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 Sean & my wife Mary Feeney wish to make a formal submission regarding the proposed peaker power plant development in Athenry.

I have lived in Grange since 1955 and I am extremely concerned about this proposal. I am a local beef farmer and my livelihood, as well as the wellbeing of the wider community, depends on the protection of our land, environment and rural infrastructure.

My primary concern is for the health and wellbeing of the local community. The introduction of a gas-fired power plant in this area raises serious worries about air quality, emissions, noise and the long-term environmental impact on residents who have lived here for decades.

As a farmer, I am particularly worried about the changing of the landscape for future generations. This development would introduce heavy industry into a rural farming area and could permanently alter the character of the countryside.

I am also deeply concerned about water quality and the potential risks to local water sources that are vital for farming, livestock and households.

In addition, I regularly use the local road network where this plant will be accessed and it is not suitable for the volume of heavy construction and operational traffic that this development would generate. Increased heavy goods vehicles would pose a real risk to residents, pedestrians, cyclists, farmers and school transport using these narrow rural roads.

This development would fundamentally change the character of our area and could negatively affect the quality of life and future sustainability of the community.

I respectfully ask that these concerns be fully considered during the planning process and please also take into consideration the following points;

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, especially vulnerable groups such as children, older people, 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.

Dependence on Groundwater for Domestic and Agricultural Use

I am concerned about the potential risk to groundwater from this proposed development. The area depends heavily on clean groundwater for essential needs, including drinking water, farming, and livestock, making it a vital resource for the community. The introduction of an industrial facility involving the storage and handling of fuels creates an ongoing risk to this resource, and any contamination, even if accidental, could have serious and long-lasting consequences for water quality, livestock health, and agricultural productivity.

What is particularly worrying is that once groundwater becomes contaminated, the damage can be extremely difficult—if not impossible—to reverse. This raises serious concerns about whether this type of development is appropriate for this location. To sum up, significant worries persist that the dangers to groundwater have not been fully assessed, and any consequences could be permanent.

Protection of Agricultural Livelihoods

Farmers 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.

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.

Unsuitability of Rural Road Network

There are serious concerns about the proposed site entrance on the L3103, which is an exceptionally dangerous stretch of road where introducing an access point would create an unacceptable level of risk. The road is extremely narrow and cannot safely accommodate two heavy goods vehicles passing at the same time, there is no hard shoulder to allow for safe manoeuvring or recovery, and visibility is severely limited due to blind dips and sharp corners. These are significant existing hazards that already pose a real danger to road users, and the addition of a site entrance would further increase that risk.

There are also concerns regarding the suitability of local roads for this type of traffic. Rural roads are not built to support continuous industrial activity, and when heavy trucks, farm equipment, and regular local vehicles share these routes, it often leads to difficult and dangerous traffic conditions. The introduction of additional industrial traffic, including construction vehicles and diesel deliveries, would further increase the risk and make these roads more dangerous for all users.

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.

Impact on Residential Amenity and Long-Term Visual Change

There are concerns that the proposed development will be clearly visible from surrounding homes, roads, and farmland, resulting in a permanent change to the visual environment. This has the potential to impact residential amenity, reduce enjoyment of the area, and alter the overall character of the landscape, with a large and visually prominent industrial facility introduced into what is currently a rural setting. Given the long operational lifespan of the development, potentially extending to at least 2050, these impacts would be long-lasting and not easily mitigated. The addition of industrial structures, lighting, and ongoing activity represents a significant and enduring change that requires careful consideration.

Complexity of EIAR and Barriers to Public Understanding

There are concerns that, while the development is presented within a single Environmental Impact Assessment Report, the scale, volume, and complexity of the documentation make it extremely difficult for the public to understand the project as a whole. The high level of technical detail, combined with the way the information is structured, creates a significant barrier to meaningful engagement. Although the material is not formally divided into separate reports, the practical effect is similar to fragmentation, as it is not easy to assess the cumulative impacts across all aspects of the development. This raises concerns regarding transparency and accessibility within the planning process.

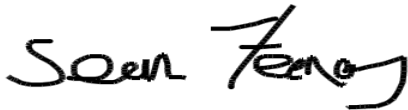
Diesel Use Not Fully Assessed or Limited

Diesel is used beyond emergencies, including routine tests and operations. This leads to extra emissions, odours, and environmental risks not fully covered by the Environmental Impact Assessment. The frequency and impact of diesel use are unclear, making the total environmental effect uncertain.

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 that reads "Sean Feeney". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Name: Sean & Mary Feeney

Date: 19 April 2026