OBSERVATION/SUBMISSION TO PLANNING APPLICATION

Case Reference: 324113

Sheila and Jim McDermott

Derrydonnell North

Oranmore

Galway

H91DE4A

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,

My residence is 3.94km from the proposed site of the Cashla Peaker Plant (Athenry).

We wish to make an observation in relation to the proposed Cashla Peaker Power Plant development near Athenry.

Our home is located in Derrydonnell North, approximately 3km from the proposed development. We are very concerned about the potential impact of emissions from this plant on the health of our family. I, Jim, have experienced respiratory health difficulties which have led to hospitalisation over the last couple of years. My health issues are known to be exacerbated by poor air quality, and the introduction of a gas-fired power plant in such close proximity raises serious concerns for my wellbeing.

Our daughter has recently purchased a home in Athenry town and works as a primary school teacher at Lisheenkyle National School, located approximately 3 km from the proposed site. Our son also intends to settle in the area. As such, we have a deep personal interest in the long-term safety and wellbeing of the community.

Through both our personal connection and our daughter's professional experience, we are particularly concerned about the potential impact of emissions on the health and wellbeing of children in the area. It is

well established that children are especially vulnerable to air pollution, and any deterioration in air quality may have serious and lasting consequences for their respiratory health and overall development.
We are not satisfied that the Environmental Impact Assessment adequately addresses the cumulative and long-term exposure risks for nearby residents. This is especially concerning for sensitive groups, including children, older adults, and individuals with pre-existing respiratory conditions.
Furthermore, we believe the proposed location is inappropriate given its proximity to residential areas, schools, and the wider community. The potential risks to human health do not appear to have been fully or adequately considered.
In light of these concerns, we respectfully request that permission for this development be refused.

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.

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.

Cumulative Visual Impact of Industrial Infrastructure

It is noted that the visual impact of the proposed development appears to have been evaluated independently, rather than within the context of its overall effects. The project includes multiple elements, such as plant structures, fuel storage areas, electrical infrastructure, security fencing, lighting, and access roads, which together would create a substantial industrial presence within a rural setting. The cumulative visual impact of these components does not appear to have been fully assessed, and as a result, the overall level of visual intrusion may be significantly greater than that identified in the Environmental Impact Assessment.

Availability of Cleaner Alternatives

Although cleaner and more sustainable alternatives to fossil fuels—such as renewable energy, energy

storage, demand response, and grid flexibility measures—are available, building new gas infrastructure may lessen the urgency to invest in these solutions. Given the climate crisis, emphasis should be placed on low-carbon and renewable options instead of furthering dependence on fossil fuels; this proposal could delay the shift toward a more sustainable energy system.

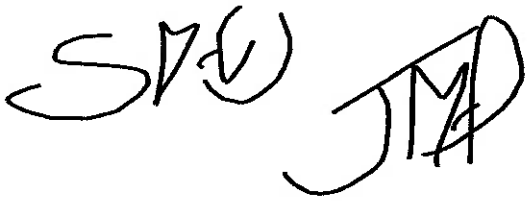
Operational Uncertainty and Lack of Enforceable Limits

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

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. Therefore, I recommend that approval for this development be refused.

Yours Sincerely,



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