

Re: Objection to Proposed Peaker Power Plant at Cashla, Athenry – Road Safety and Air Quality

Planning Reference: 324113

Dear Sir / Madam,

I wish to make a formal objection to the proposed peaker power plant development at Cashla, Athenry. This objection focuses specifically on road safety and air quality, both of which raise serious concerns for public safety, public health, and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

I am a resident of the wider Athenry area and rely daily on the local and regional road network for access to schools, healthcare, employment, and essential services. The proposed development, when considered individually and cumulatively with other current and proposed developments in East Galway, presents unacceptable and inadequately assessed risks.

#### 1. Road Safety and Traffic Impacts

The proposed development will generate significant construction and operational traffic on a rural road network that is not suitable for sustained heavy goods vehicle (HGV) use.

The local roads serving the site, including sections of the L7108 and L7109, are characterised by:

Narrow carriageways, single-lane sections and restricted visibility

Limited or no pedestrian infrastructure

Structural pinch points and bridges incapable of accommodating opposing HGV movements

Regular use by schoolchildren, pedestrians, cyclists, agricultural traffic and local residents

The EIAR acknowledges that there is a shared section of road network with other large-scale developments, including grid infrastructure currently under appeal, and that cumulative construction impacts will occur, including prolonged road closures and diversions. However, these impacts are repeatedly characterised as temporary and mitigated, which does not reflect the real and prolonged safety implications for a rural community.

The EIAR does not adequately demonstrate:

How emergency vehicle access will be maintained during closures or peak construction activity

How safe access for schoolchildren, pedestrians and cyclists will be ensured

That diversion routes are suitable, safe, or capable of accommodating displaced traffic

That the road network has the structural resilience to withstand prolonged HGV movements

In rural communities, even temporary loss of safe access can have serious consequences for emergency response times and daily life. The duration and scale of disruption proposed cannot reasonably be considered insignificant.

I submit that the traffic and transport assessment understates the severity of road safety risks and that the proposed development would give rise to unacceptable danger to road users and a serious injury to residential amenity.

## 2. Air Quality and Human Health

The operation of a peaker power plant raises serious concerns regarding air quality, particularly emissions of nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>), sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), and fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), all of which are linked to respiratory and cardiovascular illness.

While the development is described as operating intermittently, the EIAR fails to provide sufficient certainty regarding:

The realistic frequency of operation over the lifetime of the development

Worst-case emission scenarios

Potential cumulative air quality impacts arising from traffic, grid infrastructure and other industrial developments in the area

Peaker plants typically operate during periods of system stress, when air quality conditions may already be compromised. The intermittent classification of the plant does not guarantee low exposure, particularly for nearby communities.

Children, older persons and individuals with pre-existing health conditions are particularly vulnerable to air pollution. Given the proximity of the development to residential areas and to daily travel routes used by schoolchildren, the absence of a robust worst-case assessment is of serious concern.

Under the EIA Directive 2014/52/EU, an Environmental Impact Assessment must provide a complete and definitive assessment of effects on population and human health. In this case, uncertainty remains, and the precautionary principle has not been adequately applied. Reliance on mitigation measures alone is insufficient where potential health impacts cannot be excluded with confidence.

### 3. Cumulative Impacts

The proposed development cannot be assessed in isolation. The area is already subject to significant development pressure, including energy infrastructure, grid intensification and large-scale renewable projects.

The EIAR does not fully or transparently assess the combined traffic, air quality and population impacts arising from these developments occurring within the same road catchments and airshed. The cumulative effects on public safety and health are therefore materially understated.

### Conclusion

Having regard to the above, I submit that:

The EIAR does not adequately assess or mitigate the road safety risks arising from construction and cumulative traffic impacts on an unsuitable rural road network

The assessment of air quality impacts lacks sufficient certainty and does not adequately protect public health

The proposed development would give rise to unacceptable risks to residents and road users

The proposal is therefore contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area

I respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse permission for the proposed development.

Yours faithfully,

Sinead & Brian Kilcourse

Attymon

Athenry

Co. Galway

H65 Y221