

St. Mary's GAA Club
Carnaun
Athenry
Co. Galway

An Coimisiun Pleanala
64 Marlborough Street
Rotunda
Dublin 1
D01V902.

Re:Planning Reference Number 324113

Project Name: Cashla Peaker Power Plant Athenry

Date: 20th April 2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are writing to state our opposition to the proposed Power Plant for Athenry. As a club, we pride ourselves on helping our members improve their health and wellbeing. We feel that this plant directly contravenes our ethos in this regard and will endanger the health of our members and our club community going forward.

We are vehemently opposed to this project based on the following:

1. Our Members and the Health of all our club community

Air pollutants, including nitrogen oxides (NOx) and fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀), are well established as contributors to respiratory irritation, reduced air quality, and long-term environmental degradation. A peaker plant operates intermittently but at very high output during periods of peak electricity demand, resulting in concentrated bursts of emissions, particularly during start-up and ramp-up phases. Where diesel is used as a backup fuel or during start-up, emission levels may be significantly higher, as diesel combustion produces elevated levels of nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide, particulate matter, and other combustion-related pollutants compared to gas. These pollutants can penetrate deep into the lungs and bloodstream, contributing to respiratory and cardiovascular illness. Vulnerable groups, including children, older people, and individuals with pre-existing respiratory conditions, are particularly at risk.

Fine particulate matter can travel significant distances and accumulate over time, extending the area and duration of exposure. This creates a risk of both immediate and long-term health impacts and raises concerns under Directive 2008/50/EC on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe.

2. The health concerns for our children.

Children are particularly vulnerable to air pollutants due to their developing lungs, higher breathing rates relative to body size, and increased time spent outdoors. The intermittent high-output operation of a peaker plant, particularly where diesel is used during start-up or peak demand periods, may expose children to short but concentrated bursts of pollution. Diesel emissions contain fine particulate matter and nitrogen oxides that can penetrate deep into the lungs, potentially affecting lung development and increasing the risk of respiratory illness.

Fine particulate matter can travel significant distances and accumulate over time, meaning children may be exposed not only during peak events but also through repeated low-level exposure. The cumulative effect of these exposures is particularly concerning during key stages of physical development, where long-term impacts on lung function and overall health may arise.

3. Traffic congestion on rural roads during construction phase

The placement of the proposed site entrance on the L3103 raises severe safety concerns due to the inherently hazardous nature of this specific stretch of road. The carriageway is critically narrow, struggling to safely accommodate two passing Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs), and completely lacks a hard shoulder to allow for any margin of error. Compounding these dangers are the presence of blind dips and corners, which significantly reduce visibility and sightlines for all road users. These critical safety deficiencies create an unacceptable traffic hazard that must be comprehensively addressed.

In addition, the proposed development will result in increased traffic on local roads, including heavy goods vehicles, construction traffic, and fuel deliveries such as diesel tankers. These roads are rural in nature, often narrow with limited visibility, and are already used by residents, agricultural machinery, and school-related traffic. The introduction of additional heavy vehicle movements significantly increases the risk of collisions and creates a more hazardous environment for all road users.

As a club we are hugely in favour of Economic and Industrial Development in our community. Any measure that creates employment and prosperity in the locality is very welcome. However, the evidence available to us at present clearly indicates that this Power Plant is in the wrong location and its construction will bring many negatives to the area, including, hugely negative effects on our health and that of our club community.

Once again we wish to voice our concerns and opposition to the project.

Yours sincerely,

St. Mary's GAA Club Executive