OBSERVATION/SUBMISSION TO PLANNING APPLICATION

Case Reference: 324113

TJ Breen

Carnaun

Athenry

Galway

H65VF74

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 wife and I live with our two young children 3.2km from this proposed peaker plant. We are very concerned about the risks to our children's respiratory health and our own. Research has demonstrated the increased risks in America where peaker plants are increasingly being shut down.
We are concerned about the significant volume in traffic locally due to this plant.
We have significant reservations about the climate implications of this plant and how that fits with the national plan to protect the climate. This plant is located to a tourist town which attracts 1000s of visitors each year. There is huge heritage in Athenry that will be put at risk from the pollution from this plant.
The plant is unsightly and unwanted in a rural area hugely populated with families in particular and 7 schools.

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.

Long-Term Accumulation of Pollutants and Chemical Residues

I am particularly concerned about the risk of pollution to soil and groundwater from this proposed development. The inclusion of diesel storage tanks, hardstanding areas, drainage systems, and other infrastructure increases the likelihood that pollutants could gradually enter the ground over time, potentially up to 2050. Substances such as hydrocarbons from diesel and gas, along with other chemical residues, may build up slowly, particularly where there are repeated small leaks, routine operational losses, or occasional spills, with impacts accumulating over time.

What is especially worrying is that this type of pollution may not be immediately visible but could result in long-term damage to groundwater quality and soil health. This has implications not only for environmental protection but also for local agriculture, which depends on clean soil and water. Overall, there is significant concern that these long-term and cumulative risks have not been fully addressed and could have lasting consequences for the local environment and livelihoods.

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.

Lock-in of Fossil Fuel Infrastructure

There are serious concerns that the proposed development represents new fossil fuel infrastructure with a long operational lifespan, potentially extending to at least 2050, which risks locking in carbon-intensive energy generation at a time when national and EU policy require rapid decarbonisation. Investment in gas-fired infrastructure of this nature may delay or displace the development of renewable energy and energy storage solutions, leading to continued reliance on fossil fuels over the long term. Overall, there is concern that the proposal is not aligned with current climate objectives and may undermine the transition to a low-carbon energy system.

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.

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,

Name: TJ Breen
Date: 24 April 2026