

# OBSERVATION/SUBMISSION TO PLANNING APPLICATION

Case Reference: 324113

William and Margaret Hannon

Castlelambert

Athenry

Galway

H65R940

To: An Coimisiún Pleanála

64 Marlborough Street

Dublin 1

D01 V902

Date: 21 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,

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to formally object to the proposed gas-fired Power Station to be developed by Bord Gais Energy near Athenry, to be situated at Pollingroagh/Rathmorrissety because of air pollution and environmental impacts. Because of the proposed timeline it is intended to operate here, that will mean for us the remainder of our lives here in Athenry.

Our main concerns are regarding the impact it will have on our health. This will be caused by emissions like Nitrogen Oxides(No2) and particulates.

Health

I, Margaret Hannon, have been receiving treatment for a respiratory condition since contracting COVID-19. I am under the care of a respiratory consultant and am aware that emissions from the proposed power station could have a negative impact on my health. For this reason, I am particularly concerned about potential deterioration in air quality.

We are also deeply concerned about the long-term health and safety of our young grandchildren, who have recently returned from Dublin to live in the countryside and enjoy a better quality of life. They attend the local national school in Lisheenkyle, as do many other children living in the surrounding area. This school is located in close proximity to the proposed site, which raises further concerns regarding the potential exposure of children to emissions.

There are also broader concerns regarding the potential human health impacts associated with dust and air pollution arising from the proposed development. As acknowledged by Bord Gáis, the peaker plant will contribute to air pollutants. Any increase in pollutant concentrations is a significant concern for nearby residents, particularly young children and other vulnerable groups.

In addition, there is concern about the reliance on Bord Gáis to monitor, assess, and take action if issues arise, and whether this provides sufficient independent oversight.

Overall, this proposed development raises ongoing concerns for residents and may lead to continued anxiety about potential impacts on health, safety and quality of life in what is currently a valued local area.

### Environmental

We consider the proposed site to be unsuitable and therefore object to its development. The site is located in very close proximity to residential farmhouses and actively used agricultural land, including some of the most productive farmland in the Athenry area.

Athenry Town lies less than two miles from the site and has a significant population of young families, with many children attending local schools, including three secondary schools. Given the prevailing wind direction, there is concern that emissions from the proposed development could be carried towards the town, potentially impacting the health and wellbeing of residents, particularly children. In addition, Athenry has an established population of older residents, as well as vulnerable individuals in surrounding areas, whose health could also be adversely affected.

In the opposite direction, along the main road and particularly the Lisheenkyle Road, there has been substantial recent residential development, with many young families choosing to build homes there due to its proximity to the local school. This road is already heavily used, including by agricultural vehicles and large machinery.

In our view, it would be highly disruptive to undertake prolonged excavation works on this route to facilitate the installation of a gas pipeline. Such works would significantly impact daily life for residents and motorists, particularly those transporting children to school and commuting to work.

### Local Infrastructure

We believe that the proximity of the Cashla 220kV Substation is the primary reason this site was selected, without adequate consideration for the residents living in the area or for those who rely on the local road network. The area already experiences significant levels of passing traffic, making the location unsuitable for further development of this nature.

The proposed entrance and exit to the plant, located off the main Athenry Road, are also unsuitable. This road has become increasingly busy, particularly due to students travelling to the three secondary schools from surrounding parishes, as well as workers commuting to both new and existing factories in the town. As a result, any roadworks required for the installation of the proposed gas pipeline, especially over an extended period, would cause considerable disruption. Additional heavy goods vehicle traffic would further exacerbate these issues.

We have previously experienced similar disruption during the construction of the M6 motorway, when large volumes of lorries travelled to and from Cashla Quarry. At that time, air quality was significantly affected by dust and emissions. While that disruption was temporary, the proposed development raises concerns about a more permanent impact. There is already an increase in pollution in the area due to traffic on the motorway, which residents have had to accept.

In conclusion, the mere proximity of the Cashla Substation does not justify the selection of this site for a

peaker plant, given its unsuitability in terms of traffic, safety, and environmental impact.

#### Diesel Operation Concerns

We are very concerned that the plant may operate on diesel in the event of an interruption to the gas supply, as well as the annual burning of diesel fuel.

We are particularly worried about the storage of diesel. In the event of a leak, the site's limestone geology could allow contaminants to quickly enter the water table, potentially affecting local wells and water supplies relied upon by residents.

There are also serious safety concerns. In the event of a fire, it is unlikely that the local fire brigade would have the resources or equipment necessary to deal with an incident of this scale in a residential area. In addition, there is uncertainty regarding the proposed operational limit of 100 hours per year. Who will monitor and enforce this limit? There are examples of similar plants operating for significantly longer periods, in some cases up to 1,200 hours annually.

Finally, while it is stated that Bord Gáis will monitor operations, we question whether this provides sufficient independent oversight and whether such monitoring can be fully relied upon.

#### Conclusion

In conclusion, this area, known as the Fields of Athenry, is located in the west of Ireland, adjacent to the Wild Atlantic Way.

The primary occupation for generations in this community has been farming, particularly dairy farming. Families have worked the land with dedication and pride to support themselves and raise their children. Many of those children have remained in the area and have established their own homes locally. Others left for education and career opportunities but later returned, drawn by the quality of life and the benefits of raising families in this community.

These younger families are well educated and have demonstrated a strong commitment to environmental responsibility. They comply with regulations, including restrictions on fossil fuel use in their homes, even where this has required significant lifestyle changes. Many have transitioned to cleaner energy sources for heating and transport.

Against this backdrop, it is deeply concerning that this community is now being asked to accept a gas-burning peaker plant in close proximity to their homes. This proposal raises serious concerns regarding health, environmental impact, and quality of life. It also gives the impression of a lack of recognition and respect for a long-established, hardworking community that has consistently acted in good faith and in line with environmental policies.

For these reasons, the proposal is not acceptable to us.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Hannon

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A chairde,

In relation to the application before you by Bord Gais to build a gas burning power plant in Pollnagroagh/Rathmorrissy, Athenry, I wish to say that this private English company held onto the name 'Bord Gais' so as to give the impression that they were a state or semi-state (Irish) company and that their objectives would be for the benefit of the people of Ireland. Nothing is further from the truth. Their sole objective and purpose is to make as much profit as they can. That in itself is not a problem but when, by doing so, they have such a detrimental effect on the lives of so many ordinary Irish people is unforgivable and should not be acceptable. You are tasked with deciding the pros and cons of this project. Obviously this is an ideal location for the development with the gas line and the ESB sub-station nearby. But to allow this project to go ahead would be to condemn a sizeable group of the population to unknown and unquantifiable hazards.

Any fossil fuel burning is responsible for emission of dust particles into the atmosphere and these particles eventually make their way back down to earth. The proposed gas burning station is in close proximity to numerous homes and within 4 kilometres from the fast growing town of Athenry. There are three second level schools in Athenry with in excess of 2000 students attending daily, five national schools in the parish, numerous sports clubs and various industries where group where groups of people are employed. Athenry is a thriving town.

In conclusion, while the site may offer practical advantages, these do not outweigh the potential risks to public health, the environment, and the wellbeing of a growing local population. Given its proximity to homes and schools, this development is not appropriate, and I urge that the application be refused.

Le meas,  
William Hannon

Yours Sincerely,

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The top signature is 'Margaret Hannon' written in a cursive style. Below it is the signature 'William Hannon', also in cursive. The signatures are positioned to the left of the typed names in the caption below.

Name: William and Margaret Hannon  
Date: 21 April 2026