

Name: Cllr Rita McInerney

Address: Mountrivers, Doonbeg, County Clare

Date: 18 May 2026

Planning Reference Number: ACP 324155-26

Re: Submission in Relation to Proposed Cahermurphy West Wind Farm Development

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to make the following submission in relation to Planning Application Reference ACP 324155-26 concerning the proposed Cahermurphy West Wind Farm and associated infrastructure.

As an elected Member of Clare County Council representing the West Clare area, I have engaged extensively with residents, community organisations and stakeholders regarding this proposal. I have also considered the application documentation together with the Planning Authority report prepared by Clare County Council pursuant to Section 37E(4) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

At the outset, I wish to acknowledge the importance of renewable energy development and Ireland's obligations in relation to climate action and energy transition. However, renewable energy development must occur in a balanced and sustainable manner which adequately protects rural communities, residential amenity, biodiversity, infrastructure and landscape character.

In this instance, I believe there are significant and serious concerns associated with the proposed development.

1. Serious Concerns Identified by the Planning Authority

I note that the Planning Authority report prepared by Clare County Council identifies a number of serious concerns in relation to this application.

In particular, the report highlights:

- Serious concerns regarding the visual impact of the development having regard to the height and number of turbines and the spatial extent of the proposal;
- Serious concerns regarding the carrying capacity of the road network due to the scale of vehicle movements proposed;
- Concerns regarding impacts on residential amenity in the context of Clare County Development Plan Policy CDP 11.47;
- Concerns relating to the hen harrier and peat management on site.

These concerns are highly significant and reinforce many of the issues consistently raised by residents and local community groups throughout the planning process.

2. Cumulative Impact on West Clare

A major issue associated with this proposal is the cumulative impact of wind energy development across West Clare.

The area is already subject to a substantial concentration of operational, permitted and proposed wind farm developments. There is increasing concern locally that rural communities in West Clare are carrying a disproportionate burden in relation to large-scale wind energy infrastructure.

This proposal cannot be assessed in isolation. The cumulative visual, environmental and residential impacts of turbine proliferation across the region must be fully considered.

The continued concentration of large-scale turbine developments risks materially altering the character of the rural landscape and undermining the sustainability and amenity of local communities.

3. Planning History of the Site

It is important to recognise the substantial planning history associated with this site, including previous refusals by Clare County Council and by An Coimisiún Pleanála in relation to earlier proposals on these lands.

The concerns underpinning those refusals remain highly relevant and continue to raise significant questions regarding the suitability of this location for a development of this scale and intensity.

4. Visual Impact and Landscape Character

The proposed turbines, by reason of their scale, height and elevated siting, would give rise to significant visual intrusion and landscape dominance across a wide geographical area.

The Planning Authority has specifically identified serious concerns regarding visual impact. I believe the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on the character and visual amenity of the West Clare landscape and surrounding rural environment.

5. Residential Amenity

Residents have raised substantial concerns regarding impacts on residential amenity, including noise, shadow flicker and visual dominance.

Clare County Development Plan Policy CDP 11.47 seeks to strike an appropriate balance between facilitating renewable energy development and protecting residential amenity. In this case, there are serious concerns that this balance has not been achieved.

The protection of the quality of life and wellbeing of residents must remain a central consideration in the assessment of this application.

6. Road Infrastructure and Traffic Safety

The local road network in the area is rural in nature and of limited carrying capacity.

The scale of abnormal loads and construction traffic proposed raises significant concerns regarding:

- Road safety;
- Infrastructure damage;
- Disruption to local residents and businesses;
- The ability of the existing road network to safely accommodate the development.

The Planning Authority has specifically highlighted concerns regarding the carrying capacity of the road infrastructure and these concerns warrant significant weight.

7. Biodiversity and Environmental Concerns

I note the concerns identified regarding the hen harrier and peat management on site.

The protection of biodiversity, peatland habitats and protected species is critically important. The precautionary principle should apply where there is uncertainty regarding environmental impacts.

8. Absence of Updated National Guidance

I further note that the Planning Authority report references the absence of updated national Section 28 Wind Energy Guidelines.

This is an important consideration given the increasing scale and intensity of modern wind energy developments compared to when the original guidelines were introduced.

I also wish to reference the motion passed by Clare County Council in 2025 calling for no further wind farm developments to be granted pending the introduction of updated national legislation and revised Section 28 Wind Energy Guidelines.

That motion reflected widespread concern among elected Members regarding the adequacy of the current planning framework governing wind energy developments.

Conclusion

Having regard to:

- The serious concerns identified by the Planning Authority;
- The cumulative impact of wind energy development in West Clare;
- The planning history associated with the site;
- The impacts on visual amenity, residential amenity and infrastructure;
- Concerns relating to biodiversity and peat management;
- The absence of updated national guidance and legislation;

I respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse Planning Application ACP 324155-26 in the interests of proper planning and sustainable development.

Yours faithfully,

Clr Rita McInerney

Member of Clare County Council