

Observation In Opposition to Proposed Lemanaghan Wind Farm Development

May 26th 2026

An Bord Pleanála

64 Marlborough Street

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Ireland

Case reference: **PAX19.324161**

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the application for a wind farm development at Lemanaghan Bog, Co Offaly.

As a concerned stakeholder, I wish to emphasise the importance of ensuring the future rehabilitation of this unique peatland habitat, and to express my strong opposition to any future peat extraction or disturbance to the structure of the bog, particularly for energy generation development.

I am writing as a deeply concerned citizen to highlight the urgent need to acknowledge and protect the ecological, climatic, and cultural value of the Lemanaghan Bog and its surrounding landscape. This area is not only unique but also fragile, having already been significantly impacted by the legacy of industrial peat extraction carried out by Bord Na Mona. It is imperative that any decisions regarding its past, current, or future use place restoration and long-term conservation at the forefront, ensuring this sensitive habitat is safeguarded for future generations.

As an invested stakeholder, I strongly advocate for the rehabilitation of this remarkable peatland and firmly oppose any further peat extraction or disruption to the bog, especially in relation to energy generation developments. Protecting the integrity and natural structure of Lemanaghan Bog is vital to preserving its environmental and community value.

Concerns About Turbine Scale, Proximity, and Shadow Flicker Impacts

I am deeply troubled by the unprecedented scale of this proposed development. At 220m tip height, these turbines would be the tallest in Ireland (1) and among the tallest structures in the country, with a total of 15 turbines planned. Such a development is incompatible with the surrounding community and natural habitats, and would permanently alter the landscape, including the historic backdrop of the circa 650 AD monastic site in Lemanaghan and the broader North County Offaly region.

Of particular concern is Turbine #15, which is situated just 1.3km from our land boundary, 1.6km from our secondary dwelling, and 1.7km from our main residence in Leabeg, Ballycumber Co Offaly (R35YC93). The proximity of these massive structures raises significant concerns regarding residential amenity, health, and the potential for shadow flicker impacts.

Research indicates that shadow flicker from turbines of comparable size (170m rotor diameter and 115m hub height, with a tip height of 200m) can reach significant distances of up to 2km , impacting nearby homes and quality of life. (2) The proposed turbines for Lemanaghan, at 220m tip height, will be even larger, increasing the likelihood and intensity of such effects. I am concerned that Bord Na Mona are underestimating the scale of shadow flicker from the proposed turbines and I ask that this be reassessed, along with the scale (turbine rotor size, turbine tip height and turbine quantity) of the proposed wind farm.

Carbon Lifecycle Concerns and Alternative Peatland Restoration Strategies

Additionally, there has been no transparent assessment of the true carbon lifecycle of the proposed turbines. Without a comprehensive, third-party evaluation of the full cradle-to-grave carbon cost – including manufacturing, delivery, site preparation, operation, and decommissioning – it is impossible to justify the claim that this wind development will be carbon benefit within its 30-year lifespan. This is especially concerning given that the site could otherwise be restored to a net carbon sink, providing greater long-term environmental benefit. (3)

I urge Bord Na Móna and the planning authorities to consider an alternative approach: re-wetting and rehabilitating the remaining peatlands instead of repurposing them for industrial energy generation. Peatlands are globally recognised for their value as carbon

sinks, far outweighing their utility for onshore wind energy – especially in Ireland, which already leads Europe in the percentage of energy demand met by onshore wind (4), much of it built on sensitive boglands across the midlands and north west of Ireland. Offshore wind presents a more effective and less intrusive alternative, with higher average wind speeds and no impact on local households or carbon sinks. Furthermore, the midlands experience the lowest annual wind speeds in Ireland, making them an illogical choice for wind farm development.

Concerns About Public Consultation, Community Engagement, and Visual Impact

I also wish to highlight the lack of meaningful public consultation throughout this process. The efforts of the Lemanaghan Bog Heritage and Conservation Group have been crucial in informing residents, as Bord Na Móna's engagement has been limited and, in the view of many locals, insufficient. (5) (1) There is a strong feeling in the community that the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic were used to avoid broader engagement, with only limited one-on-one sessions in 2021 and a single community forum in late 2024 for the residents of Lemanaghan/Ballycumber. This undermines trust in Bord Na Mona and does not provide residents with a fair opportunity to engage with the planning process.

I would also like to highlight Offaly County Councils opposition to the proposed Lemanaghan wind farm development, with Cllr John Leahy, Cathaoirleach imploring Bord Na Mona to hear the concerns of the residents of the area. (6) (7) This further legitimises of the deep rooted concerns of the communities around Lemanaghan bog have regarding the proposed development.

The visual impact of the wind farm cannot be understated. While photomontages offer some indication, the reality is that turbines of this scale will dominate the landscape for miles. For comparison, the Mount Lucas turbines, at 150 meters tip height, are visible nearly 50 kilometers away; the proposed Lemanaghan turbines, at 220 meters, will have an even more profound and far-reaching visual impact, fundamentally changing the character of the area within at least a 50-kilometer radius.

Impact on Property Values, Community Sustainability, and Responsible Peatland Restoration

The proximity of these turbines will negatively affect property values and limit the ability to develop new dwellings within the locality. This has broader implications for the

Lemanaghan, Ballycumber, and West Offaly communities, as future generations will have fewer suitable sites for family homes, threatening the long-term sustainability and vibrancy of the local community.

A more sympathetic and environmentally responsible approach is needed for the future of Lemanaghan Bog. I urge Bord Na Móna to expand upon the successful wetland restoration efforts already underway in the Dernagun and Curraghalassa areas of the bog, restoring the rest of Lemanaghan Bog as a thriving wetland habitat. This would regenerate the ecosystem, reinforce its role as a carbon sink, and avoid the significant visual and social impacts associated with industrial wind development. The transformation of nearby Boora and Turraun wetlands demonstrates the potential for such rehabilitation, offering both ecological and, in time, commercial benefits through the sale of carbon credits, if Bord Na Mona were to choose.

Thank you for considering these observations. I respectfully request that An Bord Pleanála rejects the current wind farm proposal and instead supports the restoration and preservation of Lemanaghan Bog for the benefit of the community, the environment, and future generations.

Sincerely,

James Cantwell

Leabeg,

Ballycumber

Co Offaly

R35YC93

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