

Development Application – Lemanaghan Wind Farm (PAX19.324161 / An Coimisiún Pleanála Case)

Observer: Kenneth Dunne

Address: Back road, Ballycumber ,

Co. Offaly

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I am writing as a resident living close to Lemanaghan Bog to strongly object to the proposed 15-turbine Lemanaghan Wind Farm. This development will have a direct and permanent impact on my home, my family, and the quiet rural life we enjoy here. I respectfully ask An Coimisiún Pleanála to refuse this planning application.

1. Inadequate Public Consultation

The consultation process felt very poor and one-sided. Many of us living right beside the bog only found out about the proposal through local newspapers or word of mouth, not through proper direct contact from Bord na Móna or SSE. The meetings I attended left me with more questions than answers, as the representatives could not give clear information on important issues. This is not the meaningful engagement that a project of this size deserves, especially for those of us who will live with the consequences every day. It falls short of the standards set by the Aarhus Convention on public participation in environmental matters.

2. Conflict with Peatland Restoration and Climate Goals

I am very concerned that building this wind farm on a cutaway bog goes against Ireland's own climate and nature policies. Peatlands are important for storing carbon and should be rewetted and restored under the EU Nature Restoration Law and Ireland's Climate Action Plan. Instead, the construction will dig up and disturb deep peat, releasing stored carbon and destroying the bog's ability to act as a carbon sink in the long term. This seems like the wrong approach for tackling climate change.

3. Risks to Peat Stability and Flooding

The bog here has deep, unstable peat. I worry that the heavy turbines, roads, and foundations could cause subsidence or even a bog slide, similar to what happened in Derrybrien. The documents do not seem to properly address these risks or how water flows across the bog might change, which could increase flooding for homes and farms downstream. This could breach the EU Water Framework Directive.

4. Harm to Protected Wildlife

Lemanaghan Bog is home to important and declining birds and animals, including Curlew, Hen Harrier, Whooper Swan, Lapwing, and others. These species are protected under EU law. The turbines, noise, and construction will disturb their habitat and create barriers that could drive them away from the area. I do not believe the surveys in the application are thorough enough, and the Precautionary Principle should mean the development is refused when there is so much uncertainty.

5. Damage to Landscape, Views, and Heritage

The 220m-high turbines will completely change the open, peaceful character of the bog. From my area, they will dominate the views across the bog towards the Slieve Bloom Mountains, especially from places like Rashina and Tumbleagh. This will ruin the natural beauty we value here.

The bog also has important monastic and archaeological heritage (St Manchan's site). The proposal completely ignores the Lemanaghan Conservation Plan, which was developed with the community to guide sensitive future use of the bog. This feels like a major oversight.

6. Problems with the Environmental Assessments

The EIAR and NIS provided seem incomplete. They do not properly consider alternatives such as full bog restoration or locating the turbines somewhere less sensitive. Noise, shadow flicker, grid connection, and cumulative impacts with other developments are not fully addressed. These gaps mean the assessments do not meet the requirements of the EIA Directive.

7. Conflict with the Offaly County Development Plan

This proposal goes against several policies in the Offaly County Development Plan about protecting rural landscapes, scenic views, and local amenity. Even though the area is listed as "Open to Consideration", that does not mean any development is acceptable. The turbines are too big and too close to homes and important views for this sensitive landscape.

Conclusion

As someone who lives here and loves this area, I believe this wind farm would bring unacceptable risks to our environment, wildlife, heritage, and quality of life, while contradicting important climate and planning policies. The precautionary principle should apply, and the application should be refused.

Thank you for considering my objection.

Yours sincerely,

Kenneth Dunne