

OBSERVATION/SUBMISSION TO PLANNING APPLICATION

Case Reference: 324162

Francis Curran & Laura Eagle,
Pollnagroagh,
Athenry,
Co. Galway.
H65RD62

To: An Coimisiún Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 V902

Date: 26 May 2026

Re: Observation to the proposed development of a 220kV substation, telecommunications mast and underground electricity cable infrastructure with associated works.

Location: Rathmorrissy, Pollnagroagh, Moanbaun, Castlelambert, Knocknacreeva, Caraunduff, Caherbriskaun, Lisheenkyle East, Barrettspark and Cashla (Townlands), Athenry, Co. Galway

Applicant: Bord Gáis Energy Limited

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Francis Curran, I am 36 years old and have lived in Pollnagroagh, Athenry for my entire life, apart from the years I spent studying Agricultural Science in Dublin and completing a PhD in Cattle Fertility in Cork. In recent years, my wife Laura and I, have built our forever home here. (Planning Ref. 19/1065). We are very fortunate to have two young, healthy sons — Milo (3½) and Alfie (1½). I work approximately 30 minutes from home in Mountbellew Agricultural College as a lecturer in grassland management and cattle production, and my wife works 15 minutes from home in Oranmore. I also farm on a part-time basis rearing young cattle for beef and dairy production.

I wish to outline our main concerns about the proposed sub-station, cable routing and mast under the proposed case reference 324162.

We are regular users of the R3103 and L7109 roads, where the proposed cable routing works are planned, and we are concerned about the significant disruption, traffic hazards, and safety implications that construction activity on these routes would create.

Our daily commutes to work and school, together with the day-to-day operation of our farm, would become significantly more difficult and hazardous as a result of these works. The local road network is already dangerous and, in my view, is entirely unsuitable for any significant increase in traffic volumes, particularly heavy goods vehicles.

Having lived in this area all my life, I have witnessed and experienced numerous accidents and near misses on the roads proposed to service this development. The road contains several sharp bends, narrow sections, and steep dips, and is heavily shaded in places, making it especially dangerous during frost and icy conditions.

Our home and farm entrance are located along this road, which we rely on daily to travel to work, attend creche/school, and carry out essential farming activities. I farm on a part-time basis in addition to my other work commitments and already spend too much time away from my young family due to the demands of work and farming. Farming requires constant movement of machinery, livestock, feed, and supplies, often under significant time pressure. Any road diversions, delays, or increased traffic congestion would place an additional burden on our daily lives and further reduce valuable time with our family at a stage in life when those pressures are already considerable.

In my opinion, the road cannot reasonably or safely accommodate any increase in construction or operational traffic associated with this proposal.

In addition to the safety concerns, I currently farm at a stocking rate close to derogation levels, although I do not presently operate under a derogation. My farming business has been developed through significant investment in livestock, facilities, and farm infrastructure, with those investments made on the basis of the land currently available to support the enterprise. If this development proceeds, I am concerned that I will lose access to rented land, reducing the overall land base available to my farm and increasing my stocking rate. Such a loss would place considerable pressure on the sustainability and viability of my farming operation and could restrict my ability to maintain existing herd numbers.

I am also concerned about the potential implications for water quality in the area. Any deterioration in groundwater quality, including increased nitrate concentrations, could have wider consequences for people and farming within the catchment. Aside from the very significant concerns relating to human health and wellbeing, I am also concerned about the wider implications this development could have for

agriculture in the area. In particular, any future reduction in the permitted derogation limit of 220 kg organic nitrogen per hectare would increase competition for agricultural land that is already scarce and expensive. This would place additional pressure on farmers seeking to secure sufficient land to maintain compliance with environmental regulations and support viable farm businesses.

For my own farm, such changes could have serious financial consequences. Reduced land availability, increased competition for rented ground, and any tightening of stocking rate limits would directly affect my ability to maintain the herd size that I have invested heavily in developing. The cumulative effect of these pressures could undermine the long-term viability of my farming enterprise.

As mentioned above I work in Mountbellew Agricultural College and we are engaged in agricultural education and training of future farmers. Through my work with young students, I see directly the key challenge facing the next generation of farmers, which is access to land. This proposed development would be located on prime agricultural land in the Fields of Athenry, an area recognised for its high-quality and productive farmland.

Many of my students aspire to establish or expand farming enterprises, yet already face significant barriers in accessing land due to intense competition and limited availability. The permanent loss of productive agricultural land to development of this nature would further reduce the land base available for food production and make it even more difficult for young farmers to secure viable holdings.

The process surrounding this proposed development has also had a significant personal impact on my family. Part of the access route and cable corridor associated with this proposal is located on lands where access has been granted by my parents. As the person actively farming and managing the farm now, I did not support this decision, and it has created significant uncertainty and difficulty in the operation of the farm. This has been an extremely difficult and stressful period for my family and has created considerable uncertainty regarding the future of my farming operation.

Although this application relates specifically to grid connection infrastructure, I submit that the proposed substation, mast, and cable route cannot be properly assessed in isolation from the wider energy development of which they form an integral part. The infrastructure is functionally dependent on, and intended to serve, the associated energy project, and its environmental, landscape, cumulative, and community impacts should therefore be considered in that broader context.

I am concerned that the separation of the grid connection elements from the wider development has had the practical effect of fragmenting the assessment process. This approach has made it more difficult and costly for affected members of the public to understand the full extent of the overall project and to make comprehensive submissions to An Coimisiún Pleanála. As a result, there is a risk that the cumulative effects and overall implications of the development are not fully considered through a single, integrated

assessment process.

I am also concerned that the visual information presented to the public does not clearly or adequately represent the full visual impact of the proposed infrastructure. In particular, the photomontages and supporting imagery appear to minimise the prominence of the proposed mast within the surrounding landscape.

Having reviewed the application documents in detail while preparing this submission, I only became aware this week that the mast would be positioned directly within the line of sight from my kitchen window.

As a directly impacted resident, I find it deeply concerning that the likely visual impact on my home and daily living environment was not more clearly apparent from the information initially presented to the public. In my view, affected residents should be able to easily understand and assess the true visual implications of the proposed development from the application material provided.

I have attached screenshots from the project website together with extracts from the June 2025 project information booklet, which I believe demonstrate that the visual prominence and positioning of the proposed mast were not clearly communicated to the public during the consultation process.

Having reviewed the application documentation and outlined my personal concerns above, I wish to bring the following to your attention;

Cumulative Construction Impact on Health and Wellbeing

I believe insufficient information has been provided regarding the cumulative impact of construction activity, heavy traffic movements, excavation works, noise and prolonged disruption on the health, wellbeing and quality of life of residents living close to the proposed infrastructure works.

Unsuitable Rural Location

I believe the proposed substation and mast are not suitable for this rural location. The development would introduce permanent industrial-scale infrastructure, including a 220kV substation, security fencing, lighting and telecommunications equipment, into an area characterised by homes, farms and open countryside.

Prolonged Trenching, Road Closures and HGV Traffic

I believe insufficient consideration has been given to the impact prolonged trenching works, excavation, road occupation, traffic management systems and heavy construction traffic would have on narrow rural roads and the communities that rely on them daily. The application documentation confirms significant

road closures, stop/go traffic systems and substantial HGV movements during construction, which could result in serious disruption and ongoing inconvenience for local residents and road users.

Inadequate Assessment of Disruption to Communities

I believe insufficient consideration has been given to the effect prolonged trenching works, stop/go traffic systems, temporary road closures and traffic diversions would have on the normal functioning of local communities. I do not believe adequate assessment has been provided regarding the likely impact of prolonged disruption on residents, emergency access, school transport, farms and daily community movement, particularly given the scale of the proposed construction activity and associated HGV traffic on local roads including the L3103.

Private Wells, Livestock Water and Agricultural Land

Many farms including my own and rural homes in the area rely on private wells, groundwater supplies and established drainage networks. I am concerned that excavation, rock-breaking and underground cable installation works could interfere with wells, livestock drinking water supplies, drainage systems and agricultural land conditions during and after construction.

Habitats and Ecological Corridors for Wildlife

Hedgerows and roadside vegetation within the area provide important habitats and ecological corridors for birds, pollinators and local wildlife. I am concerned that prolonged construction activity and vegetation disturbance could negatively affect biodiversity and the ecological character of the surrounding rural landscape. Where the cable routing and access road will go through farmland there is clear wildlife activity (Photos 1-4) and a fox's den. This area of the farm has been fenced off from livestock for a number of years and you can see the activity that has resulted. This area was identified on the main Environmental impact assessment report under ED1 area (Figure 5-15).

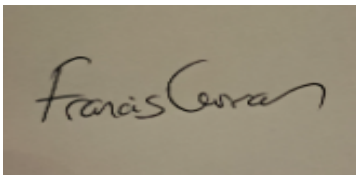
Safety Risks Near Lisheenkyle National School

The proposed cable route passes in close proximity to Lisheenkyle National School along narrow rural roads with limited visibility and no proper hard shoulders. I am concerned that trenching works, construction activity, increased traffic volumes and temporary traffic management measures would create additional safety risks and disruption for children, parents and school staff, particularly during school drop-off and collection times.

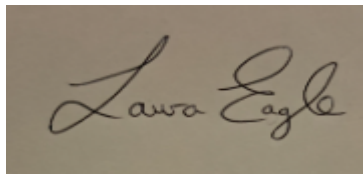
Conclusion

In my view, the cumulative impact of the proposed substation, mast and underground cable route has not been adequately assessed within the planning documentation. Significant concerns remain regarding the likely effects on residents, agriculture, groundwater protection, biodiversity, traffic safety and rural amenity. I do not believe sufficient information or mitigation has been provided to address these concerns, and I respectfully request that this application be refused.

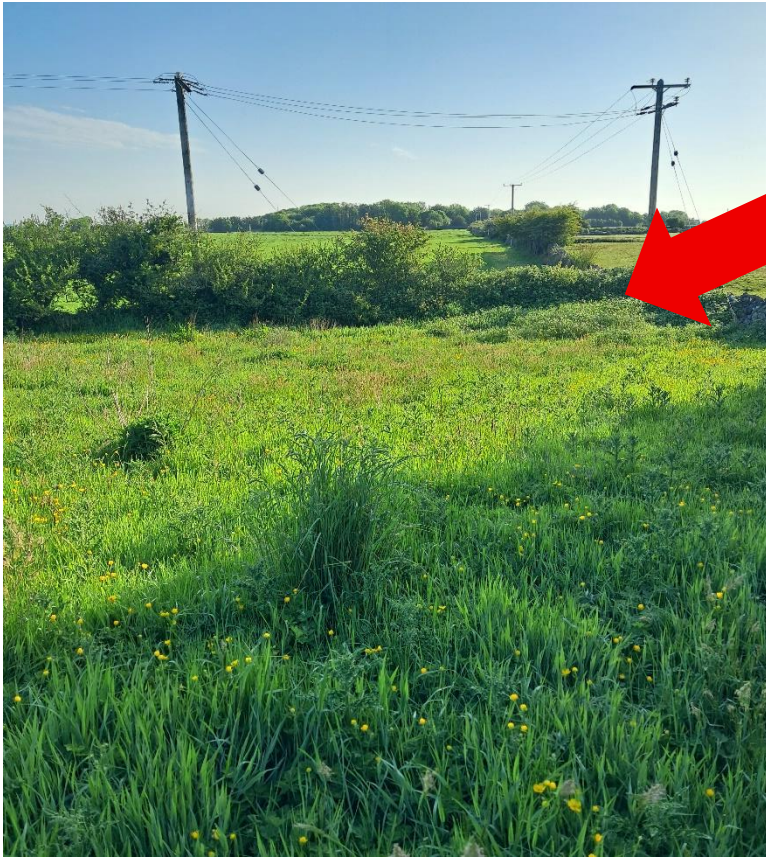
Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light brown background. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "Francis Curran".

Name: Francis Curran
Date: 26 May 2026

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light brown background. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "Laura Eagle".

Name: Laura Eagle
Date: 26 May 2026



Proposed access road and cable routing (main Environmental impact assessment report under ED1 area (Figure 5-15).

Wildlife pathway where proposed access road and cable routing (Main Environmental impact assessment report under ED1 area (Figure 5-15).



Cashla Peaker Plant

Bord Gáis Energy is planning to develop a new gas-powered peaker plant at a location west of Athenry, County Galway, known as the Cashla Peaker Plant. This will provide flexible electricity generation which is recognised as a key part of the transition to net zero and to energy security.

[Find out more](#)

[Get in touch](#)



<https://www.cashlopeakerplant.ie/home> accessed 26/05/2026



Mast not depicted in public information

Cashla Peaker Plant Further Information



As you may be aware, Bord Gáis Energy is proposing a new gas-powered peaker plant at a location west of Athenry, County Galway, known as the Cashla Peaker Plant. This plant will provide flexible electricity generation, which is

Community engagement

Bord Gáis Energy recently held two public information events in the Rahsaan Woods Hotel, Athenry, to invite feedback from local residents, and the wider community on the project proposals. We've now collated and reviewed all

Cashla Peaker Plant project
information leaflet - June 2025
downloaded 26/05/2026