

Gearoid & Zoe Harty,
Castlelambert
Athenry
Co Galway
H65FD77

To: An Coimisiún Pleanála

64 Marlborough Street

Dublin 1

D01 V902

Date May 25 2026

Re: Planning permission for a 220kV Substation and 220kV

**Underground electricity cabling connecting to the existing Cashla 220kV substation,
Athenry. Case No: VA07.324162**

Location: Pollnagroagh and Rathmorrissy (Townlands), Athenry, Co. Galway

Applicant: Bord Gáis Energy Limited

I am a concerned local and I live very close to this proposed gas powered peaker plant. I am not against any form of infrastructure, and I believe that energy security has never been more important for us as a country. However, the location of this proposed plant and associated infrastructure is completely wrong and not genuinely considering the people in the community, lack of local infrastructure and the existing infrastructure is not suitable enough for a project of this scale.

Based on this I wish to submit an objection to the planning of the proposed 220kV substation and 220kV underground electricity cabling for the following reasons.

1. Conflict with the Rural Landscape and Character of the Area

The proposed development would introduce large-scale industrial infrastructure into a rural farming landscape, comprising:

- A major 220kV substation
- Permanent underground strategic infrastructure
- A 36-metre telecommunications mast
- Permanent external lighting

This proposal would have a detrimental impact on the rural character and visual amenity of the area and is at odds with the existing landscape and the residential nature of the locality.

2. Inadequate Community Engagement

The applicant has demonstrated genuine and meaningful engagement with all affected residents and landowners. My parents are both vulnerable persons with my Dad suffering from long term heart disease. No representative contacted my parents, and they live along the existing route with a proposed junction route outside their home. It is myself that takes care of them and the route will be blocked to their home for a considerable amount of time but no consultation to myself or my parents.

Additional shortcomings include:

- A significant number of affected residents were not consulted on an individual basis. A number of families interconnect caring for their parents
- The information made available regarding construction impacts was insufficient
- No substantive discussions has taken place regarding the long-term effects of the infrastructure
- The concerns of those living and working along the affected roads have not been adequately addressed in the application, especially vulnerable persons like my parents

For a development of this scale and duration, the extent of community consultation falls well short of what should reasonably be expected.

3. Insufficient Assessment of Noise and Electromagnetic Fields

A comprehensive baseline noise survey has not been carried out for residential properties along the route.

No detailed electromagnetic field modelling appears to have been completed for nearby homes or farms

My parents and I have not been adequately informed about potential impacts during the operational phase

The application does not demonstrate clearly how nearby residential and agricultural properties will be protected

Given the scale of the proposed 220kV infrastructure, all of these issues should be comprehensively assessed before any planning determination is made.

4. Concerns Regarding Biodiversity and Protected Species

The submitted documentation confirms that seven protected bat species have been recorded within the route corridor, including species afforded protection under the EU Habitats Directive.

Bat surveys were conducted over a limited timeframe

The ecological assessment may not fully capture seasonal variations in species activity

Permanent lighting installations and the proposed telecommunications mast have the potential to interfere with bat foraging and movement routes

Hedgerow removal will cause lasting damage to biodiversity corridors relied upon by bats and bird species

The mitigation measures put forward do not appear to be proportionate to the ecological sensitivity of this area.

5. Risks of Noise, Vibration and Structural Damage to Property

The application confirms that a 22-tonne rock breaker may be deployed during construction in areas of karst limestone geology.

No vibration assessments have been conducted for individual properties

Baseline structural surveys have not been offered to homeowners or farmers in the affected area

No detailed analysis has been provided of the risks posed to older residential buildings, farm structures, stone walls or agricultural outbuildings

The proposed works will take place in close proximity to occupied homes and farmland. Without baseline surveys and ongoing vibration monitoring in place, residents would have very little recourse should structural damage occur during construction.

6. Engineering and Structural Issues at Castlelambert Bridge

The applicant's own engineering team concluded that the Castlelambert Overbridge is not structurally capable of accommodating certain project loads. Despite this finding, the proposed cable route and associated works remain in the same area.

No integrated assessment has been carried out on how the trenching works may affect the bridge structure

There is no satisfactory explanation of how long-term infrastructure safety will be ensured at this location

The planning authority has not been presented with sufficient evidence to confirm that the works can be carried out without posing a structural risk

7. Significant Traffic Disruption and Road Closures

The applicant's own submitted documents confirm that local residents, farms, schools, businesses, and road users including walkers and cyclists will face extended road closures and considerable disruption.

The proposal involves:

- Closure of the L7108 for up to 5 months
- Closure of the L7109 for up to 3.5 months
- Stop/go traffic management on the L3103 for approximately 7 weeks
- Approximately 142 heavy goods vehicle movements per day throughout construction

These are narrow rural roads that were never intended to accommodate prolonged heavy construction traffic or lengthy closures. The application fails to provide sufficient contingency arrangements for:

- Access by emergency services
- Vulnerable people along the route with serious health conditions
- School bus routes
- Agricultural access for farms
- Safety of pedestrians and cyclists
- Viable alternative diversion routes

The documentation also acknowledges that karst limestone excavation and gas infrastructure constraints could cause further delays. It is my view that the actual duration of disruption is likely to be greater than what has been stated in the application.

8. Failure to Assess Combined Project Impacts

I object to this application on the grounds that the proposed grid connection infrastructure and the Cashla peaker plant are operationally dependent on one another, yet are being processed through separate planning applications. The grid connection has no purpose other than to serve the proposed gas-fired peaker plant.

Treating these as independent applications prevents a thorough and transparent assessment of their combined effects, including:

- Traffic and road impacts
- Disruption during construction
- Impact on biodiversity
- Noise and vibration levels
- Effects on landscape and visual amenity
- The long-term infrastructure burden placed on the surrounding area

Conclusion

For the reasons set out above, We respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse planning permission for Reference VA07.324162. This is not in keeping with the local landscape, local area and local community.

Gearoid & Zoe Harty