

OBSERVATION/SUBMISSION TO PLANNING APPLICATION

Case Reference: 324162

Ian & Niamh Kelly

Lisheenkyle East

Athenry

Galway

H65HW89

To: An Coimisiún Pleanála

64 Marlborough Street

Dublin 1

D01 V902

Date: 25 May 2026

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

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

Applicant: Bord Gáis Energy Limited

Dear Sir/Madam,

As a local family residing in Lisheenkyle east, route (L7109), on the proposed Cashla Grid connection route we wish to lodge a formal objection to the development of the Cashla Grid connection for the Peaker Plant.

With both of us working, our daily commute is on routes: L7109 (Lisheenkyle east), L71093, L7108 and L3103 (Ballygarraun, Moanbaun road), all directly impacted by the proposed grid connection due to full road closure and rock breaking activity. We walk daily along the route which will impact our daily lives and health.

Our children are attending Presentation College Athenry, commuting on the Bus Éireann school transport scheme from directly outside our door on the proposed road closure route for the grid connection. Our children also walk and cycle to the nearby Astro pitch at the back of the national school and to Athenry Golf club on route L7109.

In addition we commute multiple times a week to St. Mary's Athenry GAA grounds in Carnaun and directly to the town of Athenry which are all on routes L7109 (Lisheenkyle east), L71093, L7108 and L3103 (Ballygarraun, Moanbaun road).

With the lack of thorough information available during community information evenings, and 2 separate planning applications for 1 overall project is deeply concerning and missing a holistic assessment of the overall impact to our community. Full closures from 3.5 months to 5 months have been mentioned with no proposed diversion plans shared. For these reasons and many unknowns, we wish to lodge this objection.

Having reviewed the application documentation, I have outlined my concerns regarding the proposed development

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.

Disruption to Rural and Residential Communities Along Route

The proposed 8.1km underground cable route would pass through a number of established rural and residential communities, including Rathmorrissey, Castlelambert, Knocknacreeva, Caherbriskaun, Lisheenkyle East and Cashla. These are active farming and residential areas with homes, schools, farms and local businesses located along narrow rural roads. I am concerned about the level of disruption the proposed works would cause to residents, farms, local roads and daily community life.

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.

Long-Term Road Reinstatement Concerns

I am also concerned regarding the long-term standard of road reinstatement following completion of the proposed works. Similar utility infrastructure works in nearby areas have resulted in uneven road surfaces, raised utility covers and poor reinstatement quality. Given the scale and duration of the proposed trenching works, I believe binding commitments should be provided regarding full road restoration, ongoing maintenance responsibility and reinstatement to an appropriate long-term standard for local communities.

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.

Delays to Emergency Response and Defibrillator Access

The proposed works could cause significant delays and disruption for emergency vehicles, home-support services, school transport, agricultural traffic and daily commuters. I am also concerned about possible delays in accessing community defibrillators and emergency response assistance in rural areas where rapid access can be critical for medical emergencies.

Cumulative Impact on Community Access Routes

The roads affected by the proposed cable route are important community access routes serving homes, farms, schools and businesses across the wider Athenry area. In my view, the cumulative impact of prolonged construction activity, HGV traffic, road closures and disruption on daily community movement has not been adequately addressed within the application documentation.

Long-Term Landscape Reinstatement and Visual Amenity

I am also concerned that insufficient information has been provided regarding long-term landscape reinstatement and ongoing maintenance responsibilities following completion of the proposed works. In my view, the cumulative impact of vegetation loss, hedgerow disturbance and infrastructure works could have a lasting effect on the visual amenity and landscape character of the surrounding rural area.

Narrow Roads, HGV Traffic and Increased Congestion

The roads surrounding Lisheenkyle National School are already heavily used by local traffic, school transport and agricultural vehicles. These roads are narrow, have restricted visibility and lack proper public hard shoulders. The only widened sections are private parking bays located outside newer houses, which remain the responsibility of homeowners and are not intended for pedestrian use or roadside safety. The introduction of heavy construction traffic, HGVs and stop/go traffic systems would significantly increase congestion and road safety risks for schoolchildren, residents and all road users.

Students Travelling Daily Along Affected Roads

Many students and school staff from surrounding rural areas travel daily along these local roads to schools in Athenry by bus, car, bicycle and on foot. The road network already experiences significant traffic volumes during school drop-off, collection and commuter periods, particularly within this expanding rural residential area characterised by substantial ribbon development.

Additional Safety Risks for Young People and Vulnerable Road Users

Children and teenagers regularly use these roads to travel to school, sports training and other local activities. I am concerned that prolonged construction works, trenching activity, temporary road restrictions and increased heavy goods vehicle traffic associated with the proposed cable route would create additional safety risks for young people, cyclists, pedestrians and other vulnerable road users throughout the area.

Negative Effect on Residential Character and Quality of Life

The affected area forms part of a growing rural residential community within the wider Athenry area, where

many families choose to live because of its rural character, agricultural setting and proximity to local towns, schools and employment centres. The area has experienced significant residential and commuter-related growth in recent years. I am concerned that the introduction of major energy infrastructure into this established rural environment would negatively affect the residential character, visual amenity and overall attractiveness of the area as a place to live and raise families, while also impacting the enjoyment and quality of life of existing residents and property owners.

Priority for Renewable and Lower-Carbon Alternatives

I believe greater priority should be given to renewable energy, energy storage and lower-carbon infrastructure solutions rather than substantial long-term investment in infrastructure associated with fossil fuel generation. In my view, the proposed development raises concerns regarding consistency with future climate policy, sustainable development principles and Ireland's transition towards a lower-carbon energy system.

Inadequate Consultation Across Connected Applications

I do not believe adequate consultation or engagement has taken place with residents and communities affected by the wider Cashla Peaker Project. Although the peaker plant, substation and cable route are being progressed through separate applications, they form part of one overall development with significant impacts on the surrounding area.

Insufficient Information on Cumulative Impact

In my view, local residents have not been provided with sufficient information regarding the cumulative impact of the wider project, including traffic disruption, prolonged construction activity, environmental impacts, road closures and long-term industrial infrastructure within established rural communities.

Residents and Landowners Not Individually Engaged

I am concerned that many residents, landowners and businesses affected by the proposed development were not individually engaged regarding the practical impact the project could have on homes, farms, local roads, property access and daily community life. No clear information appears to have been provided regarding issues such as noise, vibration, road closures, rock-breaking, groundwater impacts or future maintenance requirements.

Transparency and Aarhus Convention Obligations

Given the scale and long-term nature of the proposed infrastructure works, I believe a greater level of transparent community consultation and public engagement should have taken place before the application was submitted. In my view, the level of public consultation and access to clear and understandable information has been inadequate and raises concerns regarding the principles of transparency and public participation under the Aarhus Convention.

Cannot Be Assessed in Isolation from the Wider Development

Although this application relates to grid connection infrastructure, I believe the proposed substation, mast and cable route cannot be properly assessed in isolation from the wider connected energy development to which it relates. The planning documentation does not adequately assess the combined and cumulative impact of the proposed infrastructure on the surrounding rural area, road network, residential amenity, agricultural activity and local environment in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

Scale of Disruption and Infrastructure Pressure Underestimated

In my view, insufficient consideration has been given to the practical impact this development would have on local communities, rural roads, farms, traffic movement, groundwater conditions and the overall character of the surrounding area. Residents and road users would experience the development as a significant and prolonged infrastructure project rather than as isolated standalone works. I believe the scale of disruption and infrastructure pressure associated with the proposed development has been underestimated within the planning documentation.

Likely Scale and Duration of Disruption Not Fully Reflected

I am concerned that the application does not fully reflect the likely scale, duration and intensity of disruption associated with prolonged construction works, trenching activity, traffic management systems, road restrictions, rock-breaking and associated infrastructure works across multiple rural communities. Given the nature of the local road network and surrounding residential areas, I believe the likely impact during the construction phase has been significantly underestimated.

Further Assessment Required and Precautionary Approach Needed

I believe further assessment is required regarding the long-term impact of the proposed infrastructure on rural amenity, groundwater protection, traffic safety, agricultural activity and future development within the area. I am also concerned that no detailed vibration assessment appears to have been carried out in relation to trenching works, rock-breaking, excavation activity or heavy construction traffic along the proposed cable route. Given the sensitive karst limestone geology within the area, vibrations may travel further and affect nearby homes, boundary walls, agricultural structures and local roads. I do not believe sufficient baseline studies, including structural surveys, road condition assessments, vibration monitoring proposals or mitigation measures, have been provided prior to works commencing. Given these uncertainties and the potential for lasting impacts on surrounding rural communities, I believe a precautionary approach should be applied in the assessment of this application.

Conclusion

For the reasons outlined above, I believe the proposed development would have significant adverse impacts on the local community, rural environment, farms, roads, groundwater conditions and surrounding residential areas. In my view, the application has not adequately demonstrated that the proposed development can proceed without unacceptable impacts on rural amenity, traffic safety, environmental protection and community wellbeing. I do not believe the proposal represents proper planning and sustainable development, and I respectfully request that permission be refused.

Yours Sincerely,

Ian Kelly

Niamh Kelly

Name: Ian & Niamh Kelly

Date: 25 May 2026