

OBSERVATION/SUBMISSION TO PLANNING APPLICATION

Case Reference: 324162

Niamh O'Brien
3 riverside view
abbeyrow
athenry
Galway
H65 AF51

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

Date: 22 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, Caherbriskau, Lisheenkye East, Barrettspark and Cashla (Townlands), Athenry, Co. Galway

Applicant: Bord Gáis Energy Limited

Dear Sir/Madam,

I will be directly affected by these road closures as I travel from my home to my horses in both Polnagroagh and Cashla.

This cable route will adversely affect the rural outline and landscape of the area.

I'm passionate about the wildlife and biodiversity all my life and I am upset about the impact this will have on them.

As a cancer survivor I am worried about the health effects that this high voltage cable will have on us local people. I am worried about the negative effects of radiation.

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

Cumulative Emissions and Precautionary Approach

In my view, insufficient certainty has been provided regarding the long-term cumulative impact of emissions associated with the wider development. Given the proximity of homes and rural communities to the proposed infrastructure, I believe a precautionary approach should be applied in relation to air quality and the protection of public health, including compliance with Directive 2008/50/EC on ambient air quality.

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.

Pressure for Further Expansion Near Homes and Communities

I am also concerned that approval of this development could create pressure for further expansion and additional energy infrastructure within the area over time. In my opinion, this type of industrial infrastructure is not appropriate so close to homes, farms, schools and established rural communities.

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, Castletambert, 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.

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.

EMF Exposure and Long-Term Impact on Animal Health

I am also concerned that insufficient information has been provided regarding the possible long-term impact of major underground infrastructure and electromagnetic field (EMF) exposure on livestock and animal health in an active farming area. In my view, the cumulative impact of prolonged construction works, groundwater disturbance and underground infrastructure on farms and rural properties has not been fully addressed within the application.

Protection and Reinstatement of Mature Trees and Hedgerows

I do not believe sufficient information has been provided regarding how mature trees, hedgerows and root systems would be protected during construction works or how damaged vegetation would be reinstated afterwards. In my view, the long-term maintenance, stability and safety implications for roadside trees and boundary vegetation have not been adequately addressed.

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.

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.

Impact on Property Values and Investment Confidence

The proposed substation, underground cable infrastructure and associated development could negatively influence future residential development, land use potential and investment confidence within the area. As a resident/property owner in the area, I am concerned that the cumulative impact of this infrastructure could reduce the attractiveness of the locality for existing and future residents and adversely affect the long-term enjoyment, value and future use of nearby properties and landholdings.

Cumulative Industrialisation of the Wider Cashla Peaker Project

In my view, the cumulative industrialisation associated with the wider Cashla Peaker Project, including substations, underground infrastructure, lighting, fencing and associated works, would have a significant negative impact on rural amenity, residential character and the long-term sustainability of surrounding rural communities. I am also concerned about the long-term effect this level of industrialisation could have on the quality of life, enjoyment of property and future viability of surrounding homes and agricultural landholdings.

Facilitating Fossil Fuel Infrastructure Against Climate Policy

The proposed substation, mast and underground cable infrastructure are intended to support the operation of new gas-fired electricity generation infrastructure. I am concerned that the proposed development would facilitate long-term fossil fuel energy infrastructure at a time when national and EU climate policy requires significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and greater transition towards sustainable and lower-carbon energy systems.

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.

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.

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.

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

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, appearing to read 'Niamh O'Brien', written in a cursive style.

Name: Niamh O'Brien

Date: 22 May 2026