

OBSERVATION/SUBMISSION TO PLANNING APPLICATION

Case Reference: 324162

Sarah Dillon
Lisheenkyle East,
Athenry
Galway
H65N510

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, Caherbriskau, Lisheenkyle East, Barrettspark and Cashla (Townlands), Athenry, Co. Galway

Applicant: Bord Gáis Energy Limited

Dear Sir/Madam,

To whom it may concern,

I would like to object to the Athenry power plant due to the disruption to local traffic, damage to health and disruption to schools.

I have a small family with a little girl who already has asthma, I do not want unnecessary fumes being pumped into the air near my family.

This traffic will delay us dropping our daughter to school and in turn delaying us getting to work.

This could be done in a less populated area that is not near and town or residential areas.

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

Emissions Impact on Residents and Vulnerable Groups

Although this application relates to the proposed substation and mast, both form part of infrastructure required for the wider Cashla Peaker Project and the operation of the proposed gas-fired peaker plant. I am concerned about the potential impact of emissions associated with the overall development on local air quality and public health, particularly for nearby residents, children, older people and individuals with respiratory conditions.

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.

Absence of Standalone Noise Assessment

I am also concerned that no standalone noise assessment appears to have been carried out regarding the proposed grid connection infrastructure, including the substation and associated works. I do not believe sufficient assessment has been provided regarding potential construction noise, operational noise or the impact on nearby residents located along the proposed cable route and surrounding rural roads.

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.

Incompatible with Rural Character and Galway CDP

In my view, the scale, appearance and industrial nature of the proposed infrastructure are not compatible with the surrounding residential and agricultural landscape. I do not believe the proposal is consistent with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development or with the protection of rural character and landscape objectives contained within the Galway County Development Plan.

Industrialisation of the Surrounding Countryside

Although this application is being considered separately, the proposed substation and mast form part of a wider connected energy development and would contribute to the increasing industrialisation of the surrounding countryside through the concentration of substations, lighting, fencing and associated infrastructure within a quiet rural area.

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, 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.

Karst Geology and Constrained Road Network

The proposed cable route would involve major construction activity through established rural areas with ribbon development, homes, farms, schools and businesses located along the route. In my view, the cumulative impact of prolonged roadworks, rock-breaking, excavation activity and construction traffic has not been fully addressed within the application documentation, particularly given the sensitive karst limestone geology and constrained nature of the local road network.

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.

Emergency Services and Limited Alternative Routes

I am concerned about the impact the proposed cable and construction works could have on emergency access and daily movement throughout the area. The affected rural roads are used daily by ambulances, emergency services, carers, school transport, farmers, local businesses and residents, and many of these roads have limited alternative access routes available.

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.

Disruption to Livestock Farming and Farm Access

The proposed cable route passes through an active farming area supporting livestock farming, milk collection, machinery movement and daily farm access. I am concerned about the disruption that prolonged trenching works, road occupation and construction activity would cause to the normal operation of farms throughout the area, particularly along narrow rural roads heavily relied upon by the agricultural community.

Groundwater and Drainage in Karst Limestone Geology

I believe insufficient consideration has been given to the possible impact trenching and excavation works could have on groundwater movement, field drainage systems and soil conditions along the route. The proposed works pass through an area of sensitive karst limestone geology where groundwater flows, drainage pathways and subsurface conditions can be complex and unpredictable. Given the nature of karst geology, I believe a precautionary approach should be applied regarding excavation activity, groundwater protection and potential impacts on surrounding lands, wells and drainage systems under the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC).

Private Wells, Livestock Water and Agricultural Land

Many farms 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.

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.

Damage to Hedgerows, Root Systems and Roadside Vegetation

The proposed cable route passes through established rural hedgerows, mature roadside vegetation and tree-lined sections which form part of the local biodiversity network and rural landscape character. I am concerned that trenching works and excavation activity could result in long-term damage to hedgerows, root systems and roadside vegetation throughout the area.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Long-Term Impact on Rural Development Patterns and Amenity

I believe insufficient consideration has been given to the long-term impact that concentrating large-scale energy infrastructure within the area could have on future rural development patterns, residential amenity and the character of the local community. The proposed development would introduce permanent industrial-scale infrastructure into an established rural landscape and could undermine the sustainable growth of the surrounding rural community, including the future use and development potential of nearby residential properties and landholdings.

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.

Incompatibility with Ireland's Climate Obligations

In my view, insufficient consideration has been given to the long-term climate implications associated with infrastructure designed to support fossil fuel-based electricity generation. I believe the compatibility of the proposed development with Ireland's climate obligations, emissions reduction targets and broader sustainability objectives has not been adequately demonstrated within the application documentation.

Broader Climate and Sustainability Implications of Grid Infrastructure

Although this application relates to associated grid infrastructure rather than the generating station itself, the proposed substation and underground cable route are necessary components of the overall energy development. I believe the broader climate and sustainability implications of the infrastructure should therefore be fully considered as part of the planning assessment process.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Dillon'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large 'S' and a stylized 'D'.

Name: Sarah Dillon

Date: 25 May 2026