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The Secretary  
An Coimisiún Pleanála  
64 Marlborough Street  
Dublin 1, D01 V902

20 May 2026

**Re: Submission of Objection — Proposed Maughanaclea Wind Farm**  
**Case Reference: ACP-324165-26 (324165)**

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to object to the proposed wind farm development at Maughanaclea. My home is in Droumsullivan, in the Mealagh Valley outside Bantry, approximately 4 km from the nearest of the proposed turbines. I live here with my husband Patrick Kearney and our school-aged children. I am forty-nine years of age and I work in childcare, so I spend my days minding small children and thinking about what kind of place we are leaving behind for them. I would ask the Commission to read this objection with that in mind.

*I. The valley we live in*

The Mealagh Valley is not an empty stretch of upland. It is a settled, lived-in place with families, farms, walkers, and visitors. The very thing that makes it what it is, the quiet, the long view down the valley, the feeling that you have stepped slightly outside the noise of the modern world, is exactly what a row of 169-metre turbines on the ridgeline will destroy. To put that height in plain terms, each machine would stand taller than the Great Pyramid of Giza, which is about 139 metres. That is not a piece of street furniture. It is an industrial structure that will sit above my home for the rest of my life, and it cannot be screened, planted out, or softened.

Cork County Council's own Development Plan recognises the Mealagh river valley as part of the landscape setting of Bantry and discourages further extensive upland development in this area. The Plan singles out the Mealagh river valley walkway as an amenity that future development is expected to link to and protect, not to overshadow. The proposed turbines do the opposite. They break the ridgeline, they dominate every view from the valley floor where I live, and they treat a protected landscape as if it were a blank site.

*II. Our children, and a household member who suffers with migraines*

My children are at the age where they need full, uninterrupted sleep. They are in school, they are growing, they are learning. I do not accept that an industrial-scale wind installation can be put within 4 km of where my children sleep without consequences for them. I work with young children for a living and I know what tiredness does to a small child, in concentration, in mood, in their ability to learn. The peer-reviewed evidence on this is not vague: a systematic review by Onakpoya and colleagues (2015) found a statistically significant association between wind turbine noise and both annoyance and sleep disturbance in nearby residents, and Schmidt and Klokke (2014) reached similar conclusions in their review of the same literature (see sources A and B). The effect is not imagined. It has been measured.

I also have to think of a member of our household who suffers from migraines. Anyone who has lived with a migraine sufferer will know how fragile the line is between a managed condition and a debilitating episode. Sleep loss, low-frequency noise, flicker on a bright morning, all of these are well-known triggers. I am not prepared to expose someone I love to a 24-hour-a-day source of those triggers for the benefit of a private developer's balance sheet. The EIAR does not, in my reading of it, take any meaningful account of households where a vulnerable member lives.

### *III. Noise in this particular valley*

I want to record specifically that I object on grounds of noise. The Mealagh Valley is a complex, hilly, sheltered landscape, and noise behaves very differently here than it does on flat ground. Sound carries along the valley floor, bounces off the ridges, and travels much further at night when the air is still. The developer's noise assessment, in my view, does not properly model this kind of terrain. Background noise was measured in locations that do not reflect the quietest spots where families like mine actually live. Night-time, low-frequency, and amplitude-modulated noise are not adequately characterised. On top of that, the construction phase alone is forecast to last 18 to 24 months, with rock-breaking on a peat-and-rock ridge that will echo down the valley throughout. I do not believe the noise impact on this household has been honestly assessed, and I ask the Commission to treat this as a substantive ground of objection.

### *IV. What I will see from my own window*

I have lived in places where the view is ordinary. The Mealagh Valley is not one of them. I did not move here by accident, and neither did my neighbours. The visual impact of fifty-storey-high turbines lined along the ridge above us is not something that can be mitigated by paint colour or set-back distance. It is the difference between looking out at a hillside and looking out at a power station. I do not want to spend the rest of my life with that view, and I do not believe I should have to. The Cork County Development Plan protects scenic views and the rural character of West Cork precisely so that residents do not have to.

### *V. The wildlife, the ground, and the water under it*

We are on a private well. We do not have a mains supply to fall back on, and neither do many of our neighbours. The construction of access tracks, turbine bases, and borrow pits on the peaty, fractured ground above us is a serious risk to that water supply. Vibration during construction, alteration of natural drainage, and the disturbance of peat are all matters that affect what comes out of the tap in my kitchen. I have not seen any baseline testing of the wells in this part of the valley. If a private water supply is contaminated or simply runs dry as a result of this development, no remedial plan in an EIAR will give it back.

I am equally concerned for the wildlife of the valley. The vibration and disturbance of an 18 to 24 month construction period will be felt by every creature on this ridge, from the birds nesting in the gorse to the salmon in the streams below. The Mealagh Valley is not a sterile place; it is full of living things, and they cannot speak for themselves at this hearing.

### *VI. Our home, our property, our future here*

I will be direct about property values, because pretending it does not matter would be dishonest. Our home is the single biggest thing we own, and we have spent our adult lives paying for it. Independent peer-reviewed Irish research by Gillespie and McHale (2023), based on transactions along the west of

Ireland, found that proximity to wind turbines depressed house prices by approximately 14.7 percent within one kilometre, with measurable effects persisting beyond that distance for years afterwards (see source C). At 4 km we may sit on the outer edge of that effect, but in a market where the appeal of West Cork is tranquillity and view, the loss is real. More fundamentally, the question is not just about resale. It is about whether young families will still choose to settle in the Mealagh Valley once it is industrialised. If they do not, our children's generation will have to leave to find a place to make their own lives, and the chain that runs back through generations of families in this valley will be broken.

#### *VII. Tourism and what visitors actually come here for*

I see visitors all year round in this area, walkers on the Mealagh Valley Loop, pilgrims on St Finbarr's Pilgrimage Path, people staying in B&Bs; and self-catering places, drivers stopping just to look at the view. None of them come for the wind turbines. The Fáilte Ireland West Cork Coast Destination and Experience Development Plan (2024) makes the case explicitly: West Cork's tourism product is built on unspoiled landscape, dark skies, and a sense of escape (see source D). Putting an industrial wind installation on a prominent ridge above the Mealagh Valley directly contradicts the strategy our own tourism body has set out. No one is going to pay to come and look at this.

#### *VIII. Enough is enough in West Cork*

I support climate action. I am not anti-wind, and I want my children to grow up in a country that takes its emissions seriously. But West Cork is already carrying a disproportionate share of onshore wind development, and Maughanaclea is being proposed on top of wind farms that are already operating, permitted, or under appraisal in the surrounding hills. The cumulative effect of all this on one small corner of the country has not been honestly assessed. Renewable energy needs to be sited where it does the least harm, and the right answer is not to keep stacking it on whichever rural community is least able to push back.

#### *IX. What I am asking the Commission to do*

I am asking An Coimisiún Pleanála to refuse permission for the Maughanaclea Wind Farm. I am asking the Commission to take seriously that this is a settled, scenic valley with families, school-aged children, vulnerable household members, private water supplies, and a tourism economy that all depend on what is currently here. I am asking it to weigh that against the interests of a private developer who does not live in the Mealagh Valley and will not have to listen to these turbines for the rest of his life. I will, and so will my children.

Yours faithfully,

Caroline Morgan

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#### **Sources cited**

**Source A.** Onakpoya, I. J., O'Sullivan, J., Thompson, M. J., & Heneghan, C. J. (2015). *The effect of wind turbine noise on sleep and quality of life: A systematic review and meta-analysis of observational studies*. *Environment International*, 82, 1–9.

**Source B.** Schmidt, J. H., & Klokke, M. (2014). *Health effects related to wind turbine noise exposure: A systematic review*. PLOS ONE, 9(12), e114183.

**Source C.** Gillespie, T., & McHale, P. (2023). *Wind Turbines and House Prices Along the West of Ireland: A Hedonic Pricing Approach*. CERIS Working Paper 2023/01, University of Galway. Available from the CERIS website, University of Galway.

**Source D.** Fáilte Ireland (2024). *Wild Atlantic Way Regional Tourism Development Strategy / West Cork Coast Destination and Experience Development Plan*. Fáilte Ireland, Dublin.