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An Coimisiún Pleanála

10 May 2026

Dear Sir

Re: An Coimisiún Pleanála - Case reference: PAX04.324165

Applicant: Maughanaclea Ltd / Enerco

I refer to the above Strategic Infrastructure Development application made to you by Maughanaclea Ltd, for planning permission for Maughanaclea Wind Farm consisting of 14 no. wind turbines, a 110kV substation and 110kV underground cabling connection and associated works located in Ardrah, Maughanaclea, Ballynamought, Gortloughra, Cousane, Coomclogh, Derragh, Glanycarney, Keenrath, Derrynacaheragh, Shiplough, Coolsnaghtig and other townlands Co. Cork, and have outlined below my submission objecting to this development.

I am a resident of the Mealagh Valley where several of these proposed wind turbines would be sited. Although I am in the happy position of the proposed development not being immediately visible from my house, I would be impacted by them every time I leave my home to walk, or drive anywhere in this area. So I feel I have no alternative other than to object to the whole proposed wind farm for a number of reasons, the main one being that this is not an appropriate location.

Planning Policy and Guidelines

The proposed turbines would be some of the largest built. The 2006 Wind Energy guidelines were issued when the turbine heights were much lower, and therefore are completely inappropriate for a development of this proposed size. These guidelines do not give sufficient protection to residential amenity, landscape character, and environmental issues.

The County Cork Development Plan (section 13.6, page 296) designates some of this proposed area as open to consideration subject to certain criteria (paragraph 13.6.7) as follows:

Commercial wind energy development is open to consideration in these areas where proposals can avoid adverse impacts on:
• Residential amenity particularly in respect of noise, shadow flicker and visual impact;
• Urban areas and Metropolitan/Town Green Belts;
• Natura 2000 Sites (SPA's and SAC's), Natural Heritage Areas (NHA's), proposed Natural Heritage Areas and other sites and locations of significant ecological value.
• Architectural and archaeological heritage;
• Visual quality of the landscape and the degree to which impacts are highly visible over wider areas. In planning such development, consideration should also be given to the cumulative impacts of such proposals.

In particular points one, four and five of this list are relevant to this application. I would point out that the topography of the Mealagh Valley does mean that noise travels in unusual ways and the developer does not state whether this has been taken into account.

This view is supported by the report from Engineers Ireland, dated April 6, 2023 and entitled Powering Ireland: An Electrical Energy Review where in paragraph 2.3.3 they state:

"Nevertheless, achieving a further 3-4 GW of installed capacity by 2030 represents a significant challenge. This includes the technical challenge of strengthening the grid to accommodate further non-synchronous generation, but also the planning and societal challenge of finding room for more wind farms. Among the solutions required to meet the challenge include:

Innovative approaches to co-location of energy generation and energy demand, for example, energy parks, data centres and other industries with high energy demand.

Advancing our ability to integrate the electricity system with the gas network – for example using green hydrogen – to create more flexibility and resilience.

Developing more energy storage capacity, and more interconnection with international grids.

Exploring new possibilities for delivering wind farms closer to existing populations and energy users, as opposed to remote peatland sites.
Plans are currently in place to meet this goal and are likely to be achieved in the 2030s.

Onshore wind energy is limited in potential due to challenges. These challenges include finding suitable locations to install turbines which are geographically suitable with strong winds. The locations need to be acceptable to local communities as they will be visible, and also compliant with planning restrictions limiting them to a distance no less than 500 metres from a domestic dwelling. "

The site in this application is far from existing populations and energy users, and is on a remote peatland site, so the opposite of what the report is suggesting. The report also mentions the need for more storage capacity for electricity that is generated, as the grid cannot currently cope with all the power generated by wind turbines.

To call this proposed development a strategic infrastructure development seems to be putting the cart before the horse in terms of strategic need. The article below from extra.ie dated 11/12/2025 outlines the cost to the government of having excess generation.

Grid constraints costing Ireland €1.3m a day in wasted energy

Joe Rossiter

11/12/2025

An average of €1.3million worth of wind energy has been wasted every day since the start of 2025, politicians have been told.
Billions of euro worth of renewable energy has been unused in recent years because producers are instructed by Eirgrid to switch off production, an Oireachtas committee heard yesterday.

“Some €2.5billion worth of wind energy has already been wasted since 2017. The annual figure rose from €50million in 2017 to €450million last year and Mr Alan Wyley (Energy Cloud CEO) said the Government expected the full figure for 2025 to be around €600million.

Mr Wyley told Extra.ie last night that the country could waste ‘way over’ €3billion in wind energy during the lifetime of this Government. He added that if the grid could handle peak demand, it should be able to manage extra usage overnight.
The Government is required to pay for energy produced by its wind sources but sometimes orders these sites to ‘dispatch down’ the power being made.”

If the government is wasting so much money it does not seem to warrant further wind farms being constructed until such time as the infrastructure for storage and usage is adequate. This links to the Engineers report suggesting that wind generation should be done close to where it is required.

Residential Amenity

The residents of the Mealagh Valley, Cousane, Maughanaclea and Kealkill communities will be severely impacted if this development goes ahead. We have all chosen to live in this quiet rural landscape, which is breathtakingly

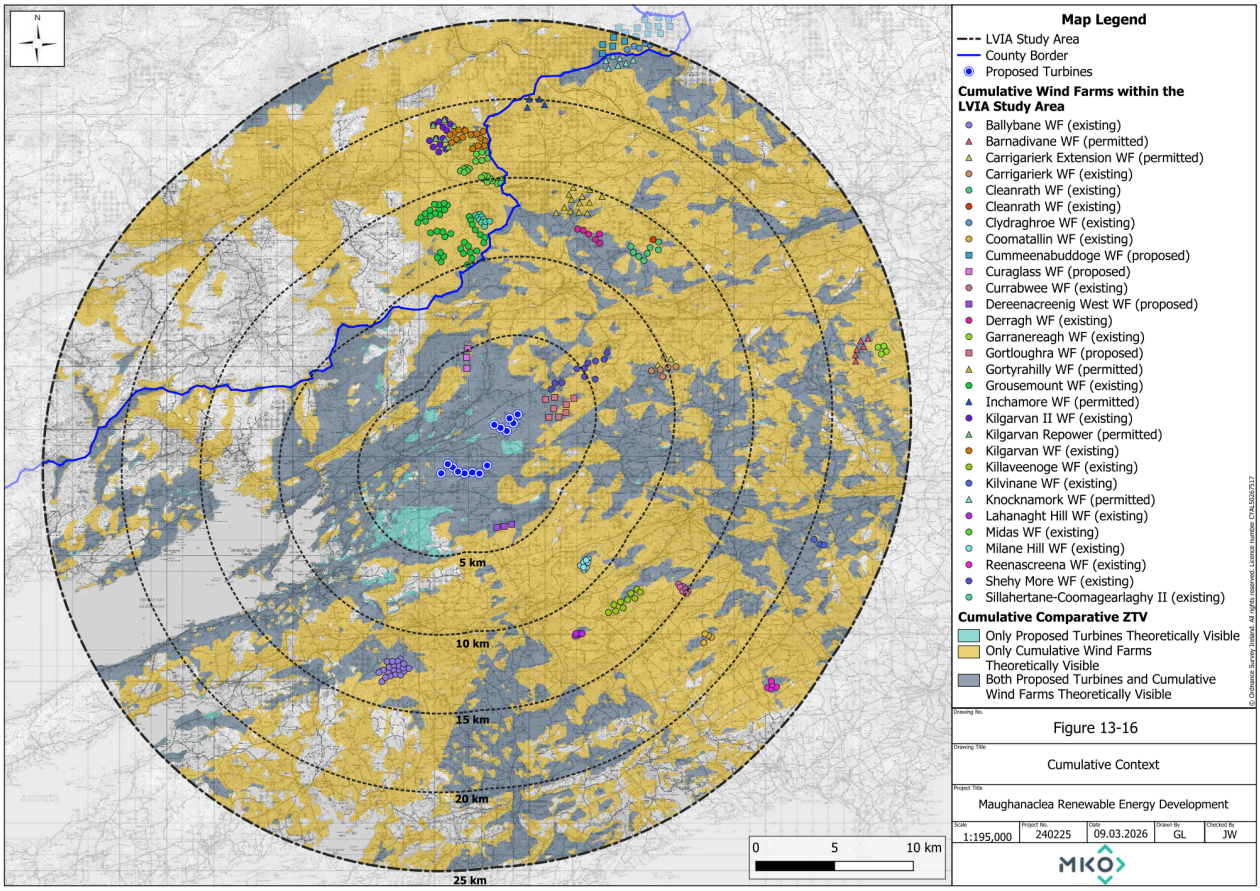
beautiful and home to a vast selection of wildlife and archaeology. The proposed turbines, at 169m high, will loom over both the nearest residential homes and the wider landscape.

Under both Irish and EU law you have the right to enjoy your property. Noise nuisance, infrasound, overbearing visual dominance, constant visible motion, obstruction of views, reduced sense of rural sanctuary and night time lighting may all affect peaceful enjoyment, particularly for the properties and residents of the 79 “sensitive receptors”, ie properties within 1330 metres of the proposed turbines.

Cumulative Effect

As stated above, the size of the proposed turbines means they will be visible over a very wide area. The R585 is designated as a scenic route, and the possibility of these very large turbines on an elevated ridge would completely alter the character of this area, and undermine that designation.

I believe that when this application is considered , in conjunction with those in the pipeline or recently approved, you will see that it means the landscape would be saturated with turbines which would do irreversible visual and ecological harm. The map provided by MKO (below) clearly shows the



cumulative affect of wind farms within a 25km radius and you can see that it will be very hard to be in this area of West Cork without seeing wind turbines.

Roads, Traffic and Construction Impacts

The roads in this rural area, are narrow, full of bends and not suitable for large, heavy and abnormal traffic movements. It is likely the roads, verges and drainage will be adversely affected.

The developer is proposing to run underground cabling from the turbines to Dunmanway. This will entail road works for some months, further damaging the road infrastructure, causing traffic problems, and impacting on both local communities and the tourism business that is so important to this area of West Cork.

Community and Social Impact

Large Wind Farm developments can often create long lasting divisions within communities where financial benefits may be available for a few residents, but the long term impact, including noise, shadow flicker, vibrations, and negative landscape and wildlife impact are experience by neighbours and the wider community.

You will see that this proposed development included 79 sensitive receptors (ie dwellings). That is a lot of people in a small community to be so impacted by this possible development.

I also noticed that the application includes 12 signed documents, giving permission from the land owner for their land to be used, but 5 of these are from addresses outside of the impacted area.

Archaeology and Heritage

West Cork archaeologist Tony Miller has confirmed the Mealagh Valley and surrounding area contains one of the richest clusters of prehistoric monuments in Ireland. Some of these are detailed in David Myler's book "An Archaeological Survey of The Mealagh Valley", and the developer's own EIAR confirms that there are 11 recorded sites within the proposed wind farm itself, and there are a further 210 sites within 5km of the wind farm, all of which will be visually impacted by the proposed turbines.

The Kealkill Stone Circle complex is subject to a Preservation Order (PO 69/1938) — the developer's own Cultural Heritage assessment admits that visual impacts on its setting cannot be mitigated.

The ancient Butter Road, which connected West Cork to the Cork Butter Exchange, crosses the site and would be permanently altered by the proposed development.

I believe that maintaining these sights is crucial for the history and heritage of this area. The are also attractions which draw tourists to the area, which is crucial to the County's economy.

The Mealagh Valley has a very active Heritage Keepers Group, and last year won a National Heritage Week award for their Heritage Day, which included talks and walks about /around the archaeology and the flora and fauna of the Valley, all of which would be extremely impacted by this proposed development of turbines.

Private Wells and Hydrology

The EIAR acknowledges that the database of private wells is incomplete and despite recommendations from the HSE, it appears that there has been no field survey or direct identification of wells, to define where they actually are and whether they are surface or deep wells.

The assessment relies on assumptions regarding groundwater flow and distance rather than site specific evidence. This is a blatant disregard of the residents who are impacted by this proposal.

Given the complex, hilly terrain and underlying geology of the area, I am not satisfied that the risk to private wells has been adequately assessed. Every home needs a supply of potable water, so I request that a full survey of private wells, baseline water testing and a robust monitoring and remediation plan be required before any development.

Ecology

The proposed site of theses turbines is upland peat. It is an area that has been relatively undisturbed for many years and therefore provides habitat for a wide variety of wildlife, some of which (for instance White Tailed Sea Eagles) are on the special conservation measures lists.

There is so much information now available about the very poor state of Ireland's biodiversity that it seems inconceivable to me that a plan to build these turbines can even be considered. The developer has even said that when the turbines are decommissioned there will be no peatland restoration, so this wonderful area of natural carbon capture will be lost for ever, as will the habitat, and consequently a wide range of flora and fauna.

In addition, the River Mealagh is classified as a High Status Objective river, which means that it must be protected, and there must be no change in its pristine condition. Although the report from MKA says that mitigation measures will be put in place to ensure this, there is no detailed plan of how the construction will be managed to actually do this. Who will inspect the works on a daily basis, how will the construction company be told about this and what measures they must take, etc.

Conclusion

In conclusion, for all the reasons I have outlined above, I believe that this area that is the proposed location for the wind farm is not suitable.

Yours Faithfully

Cathy Martucci