

21 May 2026

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**Re: Planning Reference ACP-324165-26**

**Maughanaclea Wind Farm / Enerco's Application to Construct 14 Industrial Wind Turbines on Maughanaclea**

An Coimisiún Pleanála  
64 Marlborough Street  
Dublin 1, D01 V902

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to object to the proposed Maughanaclea Wind Farm, ACP-324165-26.

Like many of my neighbours, I have spent considerable time in recent years reviewing wind energy proposals and their associated environmental assessments. My home is also affected by the proposed Curraglass Wind Farm a few miles from Maughanaclea, which has made me acutely aware of the importance of cumulative impact assessment and the need to consider developments not in isolation, but as part of the wider transformation currently taking place across the uplands of West Cork.

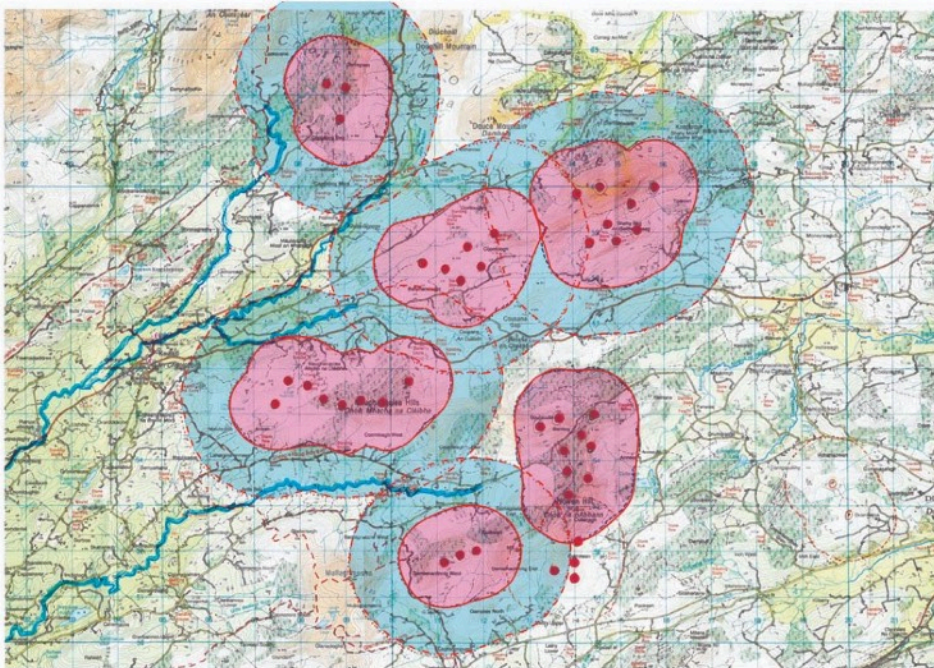
For this reason, my concerns regarding Maughanaclea extend beyond the boundaries of the site itself. I am concerned about the growing concentration of large-scale wind energy developments across West Cork and the cumulative environmental, landscape, ecological, and social impacts that will result if these projects continue to be assessed individually rather than collectively.

I fully support renewable energy and recognise the urgency of climate action. However, I do not believe sustainability can be achieved through the continuous industrialisation of some of Ireland's most environmentally sensitive and culturally significant landscapes

## **CUMULATIVE IMPACT, CURTAILMENT & ENERGY POLICY**

The Cork County Development Plan specifically requires consideration of cumulative impacts associated with existing and proposed wind energy developments.<sup>1</sup> In my view, the cumulative impact of Maughanaclea together with Curraglass, Gortloughra, Dereenacreenig and other existing or proposed developments has not been adequately assessed.

### **CURRENT WIND FARMS PROPOSED IN OUR AREA**



County Cork is already one of the most heavily developed counties in Ireland for wind energy infrastructure.<sup>2</sup> Despite this, developers continue to target some of the most environmentally sensitive upland landscapes in the region.

What concerns me most is that communities such as ours are repeatedly told that further industrialisation of our landscapes is necessary for the public good, while very little attention is paid to the continually increasing demand side of the equation. Ireland already dedicates a disproportionately high share of national electricity consumption to data centres compared with many European countries. Demand forecasts continue to rise as additional data centre capacity is proposed,<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cork County Development Plan 2022–2028, Section 13.6.3

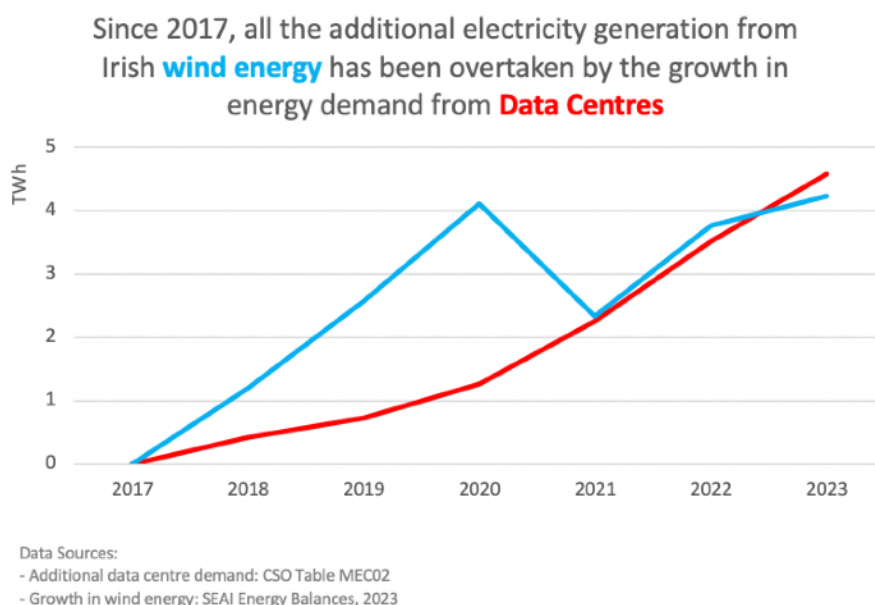
<sup>2</sup> Wind Energy Ireland, <https://windenergyireland.com/about-wind/wind-energy-by-county>

<sup>3</sup> CRU/EirGrid National Resource Adequacy Assessments

I do not believe that ecologically sensitive upland landscapes should bear the permanent environmental cost of continually expanding electricity demand without a much broader discussion about energy policy, energy efficiency, and the sustainability of that demand itself.

I am also concerned about renewable energy curtailment. Significant quantities of renewable electricity generated in Ireland are already constrained or curtailed because the electricity grid cannot always absorb available generation.<sup>4</sup> It is unthinkable to destroy precious habitats to generate energy, only to have it wasted, because the grid is unable to handle the energy.

We're told that we need these large industrial wind developments to meet energy targets, but according to a UCC study by Professor Hannah Daly, all the energy produced from these wind developments since 2017 has gone to feed data centres. Please see the graph below from the UCC study which shows the relationship between wind farms construction and data centre energy use.<sup>5</sup>



<sup>4</sup> EirGrid Operational Constraints and Curtailment Reports <https://cms.eirgrid.ie/sites/default/files/publications/Annual-Renewable-Constraint-and-Curtailment-Report-2024-V1.0.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Daly (2024), Data centres in the context of Ireland's carbon budgets, [https://www.friendsoftheearth.ie/assets/files/pdf/data\\_centres\\_and\\_the\\_carbon\\_budgets\\_-\\_prof\\_hannah\\_daly\\_dec\\_2024.pdf](https://www.friendsoftheearth.ie/assets/files/pdf/data_centres_and_the_carbon_budgets_-_prof_hannah_daly_dec_2024.pdf)

Given these existing constraints, I am not convinced that sufficient justification has been provided for continuing to industrialise increasingly sensitive landscapes when existing renewable generation is not always capable of being fully utilised.

### **ENVIRONMENT, PEATLANDS & WILDLIFE**

The environmental cost of this proposal is very real and should not be understated. The proposed Maughanaclea development would introduce 14 industrial-scale turbines approximately 169 metres in height into a landscape characterised by peatland habitats, wildlife corridors, sensitive hydrology, dark skies and relatively undisturbed upland ecosystems.

The EIAR itself acknowledges a "Permanent, significant residual effect" on upland blanket bog habitat.<sup>6</sup> Peatlands are among Ireland's most important terrestrial carbon stores. They also perform essential ecological and hydrological functions, supporting biodiversity, regulating water movement and storing carbon accumulated over centuries.

I am concerned by the contradiction of promoting the project as a positive climate action measure while simultaneously acknowledging permanent habitat loss, drainage alteration, excavation works and unquantified carbon losses associated with peat disturbance. The EIAR further confirms that roads, hardstands and buried infrastructure may remain in situ following decommissioning.<sup>7</sup>

The surrounding uplands support a rich variety of wildlife. Local residents regularly observe swallows, birds of prey, bats, hares, frogs, pine marten and many other species which depend upon relatively undisturbed habitat corridors and functioning upland ecosystems.

The EIAR itself identifies Annex I bird species within the wider study area.<sup>8</sup> Under Article 4(1) of the EU Birds Directive<sup>9</sup>, Annex I species are required to receive special conservation measures concerning their habitats.

Wildlife experiences the landscape as a connected whole. The cumulative effect of multiple developments across interconnected habitats may be substantially greater than the effect of any individual project considered in isolation.

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<sup>6</sup> EIAR Chapter 6, Table 6-24

<sup>7</sup> EIAR Chapter 11, Section 11.4.2; EIAR Chapter 13, Section 13.7.4

<sup>8</sup> EIAR Chapter 6 Biodiversity & Ecology

<sup>9</sup> EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC)

For this reason, I do not believe the cumulative impacts of habitat fragmentation, forestry clearance, drainage alteration, aviation lighting, operational disturbance and collision risk have been adequately assessed.

### **LANDSCAPE, COMMUNITY & THE FUTURE OF WEST CORK**

The mountains, ridgelines, biodiversity, dark skies and sense of remoteness that define West Cork are not merely scenic assets. They form part of the identity, cultural character and economic value of the region.

The Cork County Development Plan emphasises the importance of protecting ridgelines, skylines, High Value Landscapes and the cumulative impact of wind energy developments.<sup>10</sup> Taken together with Currarglass, Gortloughra, Dereenacreenig and other developments, I fear that the cumulative industrialisation of West Cork's uplands is reaching a tipping point.

Climate action is essential. However, climate action should not become a justification for the gradual erosion of the very landscapes, habitats and natural systems that environmental policy is intended to protect.

I believe the cumulative environmental cost of this proposal has not been adequately justified and that the long-term loss to biodiversity, peatland habitat, landscape character and community wellbeing would outweigh the claimed benefits of the development.

For these reasons and more, I respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse permission for the proposed Maughanaclea Wind Farm.

Sincere regards,

Ciara Strange

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<sup>10</sup> Cork County Development Plan 2022–2028, Section 13.6