

Harold Hurenkamp & Femke Peterse Hurenkamp

Gael's Lap,  
Coomleagh West,  
Bantry P75 DK84,  
Co.Cork

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> of May 2026

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

**Re: Objection to Maughanaclea Wind Farm SID Application, Ref. ACP-324165-26 / 324165.**

**Applicant: Maughanaclea Ltd / Enerco**

A chara,

I wish to make a formal objection to the proposed Maughanaclea Wind Farm strategic infrastructure development application submitted by Maughanaclea Ltd / Enerco under Ref. ACP-324165-26 / 324165. I ask An Coimisiún Pleanála to assess this application with the utmost care, having regard to the requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, the environmental impact assessment process, the need to protect residential amenity, water resources, biodiversity, and the proper planning and sustainable development of this rural area. In my view, the proposed development would cause serious and potentially irreversible harm to the Mealagh Valley and to those of us who live here.

My first and most immediate concern is the risk to our water supply. Our water well, which serves multiple houses below, is situated very close to the high ground where the turbines are proposed. The excavation required for turbine foundations, crane hardstands, access works and drainage has the potential to disturb groundwater pathways, reduce yield, alter natural flows and affect water quality. Given the scale of the proposed works, including deep excavation and substantial concrete foundations, I submit that An Coimisiún Pleanála must be fully satisfied, on the basis of robust hydrogeological evidence, that there will be no unacceptable risk to private wells, springs, groundwater dependent habitats or downstream receptors. If there is uncertainty on these matters, the precautionary approach should apply. A rural household water supply is not a minor issue; it is essential infrastructure for daily life, health and farming activity, and any risk of contamination or loss should be treated as a matter of the utmost seriousness.

My second objection relates to biodiversity and protected bird species. Our farm was once bare, but over decades my father has worked to restore tree cover and create habitat so that nature could return. As a result, the land now supports a rich variety of birds, including rare species. I am not satisfied that the ecological surveys for this development can adequately capture the true value of the Mealagh Valley or the actual bird usage of this landscape throughout the year. Of particular concern is the sighting of White-Tailed Eagles in several locations in the valley, together with kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*) and other scarce birds observed locally. Under Irish and EU law, wild birds are protected, and the Board must carefully examine

whether survey effort, seasonal coverage, flight activity data, collision risk assessment and proposed mitigation are sufficient. Where a development of this height and scale may affect protected species or important foraging and flight corridors, the burden lies on the applicant to remove scientific doubt, not on local residents to prove harm after the event.

My third objection concerns the permanent physical damage that would be done to the hilltops. Even if the operational life is described as 10 years, the intervention in the landscape is not temporary in any real sense. Each turbine requires a very large concrete foundation, and across 14 turbines this represents an enormous volume of concrete and excavation inserted into elevated rural ground. Once hilltops are cut, blasted, excavated, drained and reinforced in this way, the original landform, soils, peat structure where present, and ecological character cannot simply be restored to their former condition. I ask the Board to consider not only the construction phase but the lasting residual effects on topography, drainage, habitat continuity and landscape character. A time-limited permission does not convert permanent land disturbance into a reversible impact.

My fourth objection is that this proposal appears fundamentally inconsistent with the State's own biodiversity objectives and with the principle of sustainable development. Farmers are encouraged through public policy and grant schemes to improve habitats, plant trees, enhance hedgerows and support biodiversity on their lands. Yet immediately beside such efforts, this proposal would industrialise a sensitive rural upland landscape with turbines, substations, cabling, roads, drainage and major construction works. Proper planning and sustainable development must involve more than the delivery of renewable energy in isolation. It also requires coherence with environmental protection, landscape stewardship and the conservation duties imposed by Irish and European law. In that regard, I submit that the Board should scrutinise whether the claimed public benefits of the project genuinely outweigh the local and cumulative ecological costs.

My fifth objection is that the harms of this development would be borne by local residents and landowners, while the financial benefit would flow primarily to the developer and associated commercial interests. That fact alone does not determine a planning decision, but it is relevant when the Board weighs whether the development truly serves the common good in a manner that justifies such significant localised harm. The planning code requires an objective assessment of whether this proposal represents proper planning and sustainable development. Where the burdens are permanent, intrusive and concentrated on a rural community, the public interest case must be clear, evidence-based and compelling.

My sixth objection concerns the wider policy context in which this proposal is being advanced. I support genuine renewable energy, but local communities should not be asked to accept severe environmental and residential impacts without honest scrutiny of who the energy demand is serving and at what cost. There is growing national concern regarding the scale of electricity consumption by data centres in Ireland. In that context, I ask the Board not to treat every wind energy proposal as automatically sustainable simply because it is labelled renewable. Sustainability in planning law requires a balanced assessment of climate, biodiversity, landscape, water protection and human amenity together. A project that permanently damages a rural valley, threatens local ecology and undermines residents' living conditions cannot be justified by broad references to energy demand alone.

My seventh objection is based on residential amenity, visual impact and quality of life. These turbines are of an extremely large scale and would dominate the landscape around our home and valley. Their presence would be constant, day and night, through their movement, aviation lighting, visibility on ridgelines, and associated noise effects. There is also a need for rigorous assessment of shadow flicker and any cumulative effects on nearby dwellings. The Board is required to consider the living conditions of people who reside close to the proposed development, not merely technical compliance on paper. The likely effect on our peace, enjoyment of our property, and the value and attractiveness of homes in this landscape is a real planning matter and should be given substantial weight.

In conclusion, I believe this proposal would inflict unacceptable harm on the Mealagh Valley visually, environmentally and socially. It would place our water supply, biodiversity, landscape and peace at risk for a development that does not, in my view, represent truly sustainable planning. I am not opposed to green energy. However, green energy must also be lawful, proportionate and genuinely sustainable in its location and effects. This proposal feels deeply unjust to those who live here and care for this land. As you can see on the image below, we will be one of the closest to the proposed site.

For all of the reasons set out above, I respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse permission for the proposed Maughanaclea Wind Farm.

Yours faithfully,  
 Harold Hurenkamp & Fenke Peterse Hurenkamp


