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Goulanes
Bantry
Co. Cork
P75 PX73

15 May 2026

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

Re: Objection to the proposed Maughanaclea Wind Farm (ACP-324165-26 / 324165)

A Chara,

I am writing to object to the proposed Maughanaclea Wind Farm. I am 48 years old. I live in Goulanes, in the Mealagh Valley, approximately two kilometres south of the nearest of the proposed turbines. My father grew up on this land. His father before him grew up on this land. I will say what I have to say plainly and without dressing it up, because that is how I was raised and that is how I do business.

I run a building company. I have spent my working life pouring concrete, cutting roads into ground, hauling material on small rural roads and dealing with what soil and rock actually do when you start lifting them. So when I read the developer's documents for this project, I am not reading them as a layman. I am reading them as someone who knows what 18 to 24 months of heavy construction on a peat ridge looks like, and what it leaves behind.

The fourteen turbines proposed for this site are 169 metres tall to the tip of the blade. That is thirty metres taller than the Great Pyramid of Giza. Anyone who can hold that image in their head, the Great Pyramid sitting on top of our ridgeline, then another thirty metres of spinning blade above it, and times that by fourteen across the skyline I look out at every morning, will understand straight away why the people of this valley are objecting. The Cork County Development Plan tells planners to protect skylines and ridgelines from development. That is what the policy says. The application in front of the Commission ignores it on the very first page.

I want to be clear that I support climate action. I am not an ideological objector to wind energy. What I object to is the idea that the right response to a climate emergency is to industrialise the last unspoiled corners of West Cork while leaving rooftops, brownfield sites and offshore options untouched. The site picked for this development is the wrong site. There are better places to put fourteen industrial turbines than on top of an active peat bog above a residential valley with private wells and protected wildlife in it.

The valley I am writing about is where I grew up and where my children are growing up now. I want them to love this place the way I loved it as a young fellow. I want them to be able to stand outside our house and see the ridgeline the way my father saw it. That is not sentiment. That is what the

planning system is supposed to be for. It is supposed to be a check on what one developer can do to a place that other people are entitled to live in.

My elderly mother lives alone, also in Goulanes, a few minutes from me. She is one of the people I worry about most in this application. The developer's documents acknowledge that there will be temporary closures of the R586 during construction. The R586 is the road my mother takes for hospital appointments in Cork. It is the road an ambulance would take to reach her. I am not satisfied that the application properly addresses what 18 to 24 months of heavy haulage and intermittent closures will do to emergency access for the older people of this valley. There is no real alternative route. There is no second hospital. The consequences of getting this wrong fall on people like my mother, and the developer will not be the one to carry them.

I want to put noise on the record as a substantive ground of objection. The site sits on a ridge above a valley. That is a configuration that even the developer's own consultants ought to know is acoustically difficult. Sound from a turbine on a ridge does not behave the way sound from a turbine on flat ground does. It can be carried across a valley by wind and temperature gradients, focused by topography, and arrive at homes well below the source at levels that are not predicted by standard flat-ground modelling. I have read the peer-reviewed work of Van Renterghem (2017) on this exact configuration, ridge-mounted turbine projecting sound across a valley, and the published findings are clear that the complex interactions between source, wind speed, temperature gradient and valley ground type can produce significant variations in received sound level. The Environmental Impact Assessment Report submitted with this application does not adequately address those interactions for the topography we actually have. I object to the noise assessment on that basis, and I want my objection on this point recorded as a substantive ground.

I am also concerned about night-time noise, low-frequency noise and amplitude modulation, which the peer-reviewed literature has linked to sleep disturbance and annoyance in communities living near operational turbines. Onakpoya and colleagues' 2015 systematic review of the published studies found a consistent association between turbine noise exposure and reduced sleep quality. I do not see that level of evidence engaged with seriously in the application. Setting aside what the modelling predicts, the construction phase itself involves 18 to 24 months of rock-breaking, blasting and concrete pouring on a hard ridge above our houses. Rock-breaking carries. In a valley like this, it does not stay where it starts. I have done rock-breaking work myself and I can tell you, plainly, what a percussion hammer sounds like from two kilometres away on a still morning.

On the question of private wells, I rely on a private well for our household water. I am told the developer has not carried out baseline testing of private wells in the impact area. That is a serious omission. Without baseline testing, if a well goes off after construction begins, there is no way to prove causation. The burden of proof shifts onto the homeowner, who has to fund their own hydrogeological investigation against a developer with deep pockets and consultants on retainer. That is not a fair process. The Commission should require, at the very least, baseline well testing across the impact area before any decision is made.

The site itself is peat-dominated terrain. I will say this from a builder's point of view, not as a scientist. You do not pour foundations into deep peat the way you pour them into solid ground, and the volumes of concrete required for the bases of fourteen turbines of this scale, plus borrow pits, plus access roads, plus crane hardstandings, are very significant. The Derrybrien landslide in 2003, and the subsequent ruling against Ireland by the Court of Justice of the European Union in

Case C-261/18, are a matter of public record. Construction-induced peat instability on Irish uplands is not a theoretical risk. It has happened, and the consequences fell on the communities downhill of the site. The Maughanaclea ridge sits above the Mealagh Valley. We are the people downhill of this site.

The site is also blanket bog, wet heath and dry heath, all of which are priority habitats listed under Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive. There are protected species in this area, pine marten, red squirrel, Irish hare and others, and raptors including hen harrier and white-tailed sea eagle have been recorded in the wider locality. EU case law, specifically Case C-418/04 Commission v Ireland, confirms that the protections owed to Annex I species apply outside designated Special Protection Areas as well as within them. I do not see that being taken seriously in the EIAR's approach to bird survey effort.

There is a further point I want to make about the night sky. The Programme for Government in 2025 committed to expanding the country's network of Dark Sky reserves. Aviation lighting on fourteen turbines of 169 metres will damage the night sky across a very wide radius. The published work of Bará and Lima (2024) on wind farm aviation lights and the nocturnal landscape shows that these lights can compete with natural sky objects at distances in the range of tens of kilometres. That has consequences for the local tourism economy, which is built on the unspoiled character of West Cork, and it has consequences for nocturnal wildlife. The proposal is in direct contradiction to government policy on dark skies, and it cuts across the Fáilte Ireland West Cork Coast Destination and Experience Development Plan, which markets this region on the strength of exactly the assets that this wind farm will degrade.

On property value, the published economic research, including Gillespie and McHale's 2023 hedonic pricing analysis of wind turbines and house prices along the west of Ireland, found discounts in the order of 14.7% for properties within one kilometre of a turbine, with effects decaying out over more than ten years and persisting beyond one kilometre. I have built my life, my family home and my business in this place. I have a generational stake in the land. The idea that an external developer can come in, take fourteen turbines of earnings out of our valley for twenty-five to thirty years, and leave the residents with depressed property values and a wrecked landscape, all for the sake of a Community Benefit Fund that is not adequate compensation in any meaningful sense, is not something I am prepared to accept quietly.

There is one more point worth saying. This valley, and West Cork more generally, is already being asked to take a disproportionate share of onshore wind development. There are wind farms operating, permitted, and proposed in the wider area. The cumulative effect of all of this on a single community, in terms of visual saturation, road network burden, noise exposure, ecological pressure and loss of scenic character, has not been honestly assessed. Renewable energy should be sited where it does the least harm. This site is the wrong place.

I am asking the Commission to refuse this application. I am asking it not as someone with anything against renewable energy, but as a man who has built things for a living and who understands what this development will actually involve on the ground, and who has a duty to the next generation in this valley not to let it be ruined for a project that could be sited better elsewhere.

I would be grateful if my objection is taken into consideration. I am happy for the Commission to contact me at the email address below if any clarification is required.

Is mise le meas,

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Approx. 2 km from nearest proposed turbine

Sources cited

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