

John O'Sullivan
Moonlands
Laharanshermeen
Bantry
Co. Cork
P75 P599

May 2026

The Secretary
An Coimisiún Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1

Re: Submission of Objection – Maughanaclea Renewable Energy Development

Application Reference: ACP-324165-26 / 324165

Applicant: Maughanaclea Ltd / Enerco Energy Ltd

To whom it may concern,

My name is John O'Sullivan and I live at Moonlands, Laharanshermeen, Bantry, Co. Cork, P75 P599. I am writing as a private citizen and a resident of the Mealagh Valley to formally object to the proposed Maughanaclea wind farm development. This objection is personal. It is about my home, my family, my health, and the place I have chosen to spend the rest of my life. I have grounded the points below in the developer's own Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and in independent peer-reviewed and authoritative sources, all of which are footnoted.

1. My connection to this valley

I was born in this valley in 1974, at Goulanes, Bantry (P75 FH52), only a few kilometres from where I now live. My family have farmed this land for three generations. The fields, the boreens, the rivers and the hills around Maughanaclea, Kealkill and Laharanshermeen are not a backdrop to my life – they are the place I come from.

I spent seventeen years living overseas. During all of that time I knew exactly where I was going to come back to. Twelve years ago I bought my home at Moonlands as my forever home. I bought it outright. I have no mortgage on it. I have spent twelve years and a significant amount of my own money renovating it, piece by piece, because I intended for it to be the last house I ever live in. I came home to be near my elderly father and to help look after him, to be close to the rest of my family, and to live the kind of quiet, rooted life that I had been missing while abroad. I came home to reconnect with the land, with nature, and with the place that made me.

That is the context in which I am asking the Commission to consider this application. I am not a person passing through. I am someone who deliberately chose this exact place to live the rest of my life.

2. Direct visual impact on my home

My home at Moonlands lies approximately 1.1 km from proposed Turbine 14, the closest turbine of the southern cluster to me. Turbine 14's coordinates are recorded in the developer's own Appendix 12-3 at ITM 507,383 / 555,284.¹

From inside my own house, I will see these turbines from my bedroom window, from my kitchen window, and from the conservatory – the three rooms in which I spend most of my waking and sleeping hours. The turbines proposed are 169 metres to blade tip, with rotor diameters of 133 metres. At 1.1 km, structures of that scale will dominate views from inside my home.

¹Maughanaclea Renewable Energy Development EIAR, Ch. 13 Landscape and Visual, Section 13.7.3.3, p. 13-122 – Maughanaclea Ltd / Enerco, March 2026.

The developer's own Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment acknowledges that wind farms of this size "inevitably cause some 'Significant' visual effects on proximate sensitive visual receptors."² The minimum 4-times-tip-height set-back of 676 m referenced in the Draft Wind Energy Development Guidelines (DoHPLG, 2019) is a planning floor, not a guarantee of preserved residential amenity. At 1.1 km I am only marginally beyond that floor.

This is not a view I can turn away from. I cannot move my bedroom. I cannot reorient my kitchen. I have spent twelve years renovating this house specifically because of the views and the setting. The proposed development will permanently and materially diminish the home I have built.

3. Cumulative impact – the saturation of West Cork

This is, for me, the single most important point in this objection. The Maughanaclea proposal cannot lawfully be assessed in isolation. The relevant question is what the cumulative effect on this landscape and on my home will be once it is added to everything that already exists, has been permitted, and is in the pipeline.

The developer's own EIAR confirms that within the 25 km Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Study Area there are **19 existing wind farms, 6 permitted wind farms and 4 proposed wind farms**. The Cumulative Comparative ZTV at Figure 13-16 of the EIAR shows that the majority of the LVIA Study Area is already theoretically affected by wind turbines.³

More directly, Table 6-22 of the EIAR's Biodiversity chapter lists **eight wind farm projects within 10 km of the Maughanaclea site alone**: Gortloughra (1.9 km), Shehy More (2.6 km), Dereenacreenig West (3.6 km), Curaglass (4 km), Milane Hill (8.7 km), Carrigarierk (8.9 km), Carrigarierk Extension (9.4 km) and Grousemount (10 km).⁴

Dereenacreenig West – a material change in circumstances

Cork County Council has now granted conditional planning permission for the Dereenacreenig West wind farm, on the far side of the Mealagh valley near Castle Donovan, only 3.6 km from the proposed Maughanaclea site.⁵ This is a material change in circumstances since the EIAR was finalised. The cumulative landscape, visual, noise and ecological context against which the Commission is being asked to assess Maughanaclea is now demonstrably more saturated than the developer's assessment reflects.

From my home in Laharanshermeen I am surrounded. I look out at one cluster of turbines on the Maughanaclea ridge and in the next direction another cluster on the far side of the valley. There is nowhere in the Mealagh Valley for a resident in my position to retreat to where the turbines do not dominate the horizon.

The developer's narrative throughout the EIAR is that the Proposed Wind Farm "adds very little additional theoretical visibility of turbines across the landscape" – in other words, that there are already so many turbines visible in this area that a few more should not matter. I would respectfully submit that the Commission must apply the opposite logic. The cumulative threshold beyond which this part of West Cork ceases to be a rural landscape and becomes an industrial generation zone

²Maughanaclea Renewable Energy Development EIAR, Appendix 12-3 Noise Modelling Parameters, Table A12-3 – Turbine Coordinates (T14: ITM 507,383 / 555,284).

³Webster & Rollo v. Meenacloghspar (Wind) Ltd; Shorten & Carty v. Meenacloghspar (Wind) Ltd, High Court, Ms Justice Emily Egan, judgment of 8 March 2024 – first private-nuisance ruling in Ireland or UK against a wind farm operator. Combined damages exceeding €300,000 awarded November 2025; injunction issued May 2025 ordering night-time shutdown of one turbine.

⁴World Health Organization, Night Noise Guidelines for Europe (WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2009), pp. xv–xvii – L_{night} value of 40 dB identified as the Lowest Observed Adverse Effect Level for night noise, with effects including self-reported sleep disturbance and environmental insomnia.

⁵Smith MG, Ögren M, Thorsson P, Hussain-Alkhateeb L, Pedersen E, Forssén J, Ageborg Morrell J, Persson Wayne K. 'A laboratory study on the effects of wind turbine noise on sleep: results of the polysomnographic WiTNES study.' Sleep, vol. 43, no. 9 (2020). Found increased awakenings, less deep sleep and reduced continuous N2 sleep when wind turbine noise was present, particularly at higher amplitude modulation strengths.

has either already been reached or is being reached project by project, and each individual application is being assessed as if its incremental contribution is negligible. That is precisely how a landscape, and a community, is destroyed.

I would draw the Commission's attention to a related and well-documented issue of policy proportionality. Independent peer-reviewed research by Professor Hannah Daly of University College Cork, commissioned by Friends of the Earth Ireland (December 2024), shows that between 2017 and 2023 all additional wind energy generation in Ireland was absorbed by data centres, which by 2023 accounted for approximately 21% of Ireland's electricity consumption.

In other words: rural communities in West Cork are being asked to accept the cumulative industrialisation of their landscape so that demand growth in a small number of large data centres can be served, with no net displacement of fossil fuels.⁶ The "climate emergency" framing routinely used to justify these developments does not, on the available evidence, hold up at the scale at which it is invoked.

4. Loss of peace, quiet and the reason I live here

I sleep with my windows open every night. I do this because the air is clean, the nights are quiet, and the sound of the valley – wind in the trees, water, the occasional sheep – is part of why I came home. I walk the area every day. I fish locally. I use the Mealagh Valley Loop Walk. These are not occasional pastimes; they are the daily fabric of my life.

Background noise levels in this part of the Mealagh Valley are extremely low. The World Health Organization's Night Noise Guidelines for Europe identify a night-time $L_{\text{night, outside}}$ of 40 dB as the *Lowest Observed Adverse Effect Level* for night noise, above which adverse health effects – self-reported sleep disturbance, environmental insomnia and cardiovascular strain – are observed in the general population, and are more severe in vulnerable groups.⁷ In a setting where ambient night noise is currently far below 40 dB, even modest additions to the soundscape are perceptible and consequential.

The peer-reviewed evidence specifically on wind-turbine noise is also more cautious than the developer's assessment suggests. The polysomnographic WITNES laboratory study (Smith et al., *Sleep*, 2020) found that wind-turbine noise produced more frequent awakenings, less deep sleep and reduced continuous N2 sleep, with effects most pronounced at higher amplitude-modulation strengths – i.e. exactly the "thump" and "swish" characteristics that residents near operating turbines consistently report.⁸ Systematic reviews (Liebich et al. 2021; Onakpoya et al. 2015) have consistently identified increased odds of annoyance and self-reported sleep disturbance among residents near wind turbines.⁹

The Ballyduff precedent

In *Webster & Rollo v. Meenacloghspar (Wind) Ltd* (High Court, March 2024), Ms Justice Emily Egan delivered the first private-nuisance ruling in Ireland or the UK against a wind farm operator,

⁶Liebich T, Lack L, Hansen K, Zajamšek B, Lovato N, Catcheside P, Micic G. 'A systematic review and meta-analysis of wind turbine noise effects on sleep using validated objective and subjective sleep assessments.' *Journal of Sleep Research*, 2021. See also Onakpoya IJ et al., *Environment International*, 2015.

⁷Maughanaclea EIAR, Ch. 6 Biodiversity, Table 6-22 – Wind Farm Projects within 10km of the Proposed Project, p. 115. Lists Gortloughra (1.9km), Shehy More (2.6km), Dereenacreenig West (3.6km), Curaglass (4km), Milane Hill (8.7km), Carrigarierk (8.9km), Carrigarierk Extension (9.4km) and Grousemount (10km).

⁸Maughanaclea EIAR, Ch. 13 Landscape and Visual, Section 13.6 – LVIA Study Area within 25km radius lists 19 existing, 6 permitted and 4 proposed wind farms. See Cumulative Comparative ZTV, Figure 13-16.

⁹Cork County Council Planning Decision, Dereenacreenig West Wind Farm – conditional permission granted; reported in *The Southern Star*, 'Concerns over contradictions in proposal lodged for 14 wind turbines close to Bantry Bay' (April 2026): the Council 'granted conditional permission for Derrenacrinnig West wind farm on the far side of the Mealagh valley close to Castle Donovan.'

finding that noise from the Ballyduff wind farm at Kilcomb, Co. Wexford amounted to an “unreasonable interference” with the enjoyment of neighbouring properties – even though the operator was complying with planning noise limits. In May 2025 the Court ordered the night-time shutdown of one turbine; in November 2025 combined damages exceeding €300,000 were awarded to the four plaintiffs.¹⁰ The case directly establishes that planning compliance is not a defence to private nuisance, and that wind-turbine noise can constitute an unreasonable interference with the right to peaceful enjoyment of one’s home.

I am asking the Commission to consider not the average decibel reading at my window, but the lived reality of trying to sleep with the windows open in a house that previously had only the sound of the valley.

5. Mental health and the cumulative stress of this process

I am not someone who exaggerates. I will say plainly that the prospect of this development, and the process around it, has already taken a measurable toll on my mental health. The stress of reading thousands of pages of an EIAR, of trying to understand what is being proposed for the place I have come home to, of attending information events, of worrying about what my home will look and sound and feel like in two, five, ten years – it is constant and it is wearing. I am not sleeping properly.

The Ballyduff judgment expressly recognised this dimension of harm: the Court accepted evidence of disrupted sleep, increased anxiety, deteriorated mental health and a recognised psychiatric disorder among the affected residents. I am not asking the Commission to treat my stress as equivalent to a clinical finding. I am asking it to recognise that the planning process itself, when it places the burden of resisting industrialisation onto individual residents over multiple consecutive applications in the same area, has its own foreseeable mental-health impact – and that this is not, as the developer’s EIAR implies, an externality without weight.

6. Daily use of the R585 – turbine delivery route

I use the R585 every working day to commute to my job in Cork. The R585 is the proposed Turbine Delivery Route. The developer’s own Chapter 4 identifies multiple “pinch points” along this road – at Crookstown, Bealnablath, Gloun Cross, Shanlaragh and Cousane Gap – where abnormal loads will require oversail of blades into adjacent fields, temporary accommodation works and tree felling. Over the 18–24 month construction window my daily commute will be subject to convoys of abnormal-load deliveries, road closures, temporary traffic management and disruption. This is not a peripheral concern. It is something that will affect me five days a week, every week, for nearly two years – and that is before any cumulative construction overlap with Dereenacreenig West, Curaglass or Gortloughra is taken into account.

7. Private well

My household relies on a private well for our drinking water. The developer’s EIAR acknowledges that the database of private wells in the area is incomplete, yet no field survey or direct identification of wells has been carried out, despite recommendations from the Health Service Executive. The assessment relies on assumptions about groundwater flow and distance rather than site-specific evidence. No baseline testing of my well, or my neighbours’ wells, has been undertaken.¹¹

Given the steep terrain, the heavy peat cover, the proposed borrow pits, and the scale of excavation involved in fourteen turbine bases, internal access roads and underground cabling, I am not satisfied that the risk to my water supply has been adequately assessed. If something goes

¹⁰Daly H, Data centres in the context of Ireland’s carbon budgets, commissioned by Friends of the Earth Ireland (December 2024), University College Cork. Finds that between 2017 and 2023 all additional wind energy generation in Ireland was absorbed by data centres, and that data centres accounted for 21% of Ireland’s electricity consumption in 2023.

¹¹Maughanaclea EIAR, Ch. 9 Hydrology and Hydrogeology, and Community Engagement Report – Health Service Executive submission noted incomplete database of private wells and recommended field survey, which was not undertaken.

wrong with my well during or after construction, there is no baseline against which to prove it. I am being asked to accept that risk on trust, with no monitoring or remediation plan specific to my home. That is not an acceptable position for me.

8. Townland and place

My townland of Laharanshermeen is named in the developer's own Cultural Heritage chapter as the location of recorded archaeological features (sites AH132 and AH134, among others) within close proximity to proposed turbines.¹² The wider area is part of one of the richest clusters of prehistoric monuments in Ireland – a fact the developer's own EIAR confirms. Laharanshermeen is not an unknown corner of the country: it is a place with deep, recorded history. I did not come home from seventeen years overseas to watch that landscape become an industrial generation site.

9. Conclusion and request

I am not opposed to renewable energy in principle. I am opposed to a 14-turbine, 169-metre-tip-height industrial development being placed 1.1 km from my forever home, in a quiet rural valley with low ambient noise, on a route I drive every day to work, in an area where I rely on a private well, in a townland with recorded archaeological features, in the middle of a landscape that already hosts 19 existing, 6 permitted and 4 proposed wind farms within 25 km – a number that, with the recent grant of planning permission for Dereenacreenig West, has now grown again.

Under both Irish and EU law I have the right to the peaceful enjoyment of my property – the Irish Constitution (Articles 40.3 and 43), Article 1 of Protocol 1 of the European Convention on Human Rights, and Article 17 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. The Ballyduff High Court judgment confirms that planning compliance does not extinguish that right. The cumulative effect of noise, visual dominance, construction disruption, well risk, and the personal stress of this process represents, for me, an unreasonable interference with that right.

I respectfully ask An Coimisiún Pleanála to refuse this application. I came home to this valley after seventeen years away. I bought my home outright as the place I would live the rest of my life. I am asking the Commission to protect that decision.

Yours sincerely,

John O'Sullivan

Moonlands, Laharanshermeen, Bantry, Co. Cork, P75 P599

¹²Maughanaclea EIAR, Ch. 14 Cultural Heritage, Appendix 14-5 – lists archaeological sites AH132 and AH134 in the townland of Laharanshermeen within close proximity to proposed turbines.