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

14 May 2026

**Re: Objection to the proposed Maughanaclea Wind Farm**  
**Planning reference: ACP-324165-26 / 324165**

Dear Sir or Madam,

My name is Joy Jones-Lane. I am 32 years old and I live at Ards Beg, near Bantry, in the Mealagh Valley, with my husband and our three young daughters, who are all aged eight and under. Our home is roughly four kilometres from the nearest of the turbines proposed in this application. I work part time as a social media manager for Wild Hideaways, a small tourism and wellness business here in the valley, and the rest of my week is spent at home with our girls. I am writing, in my own words, to ask the Commission to refuse permission for this development.

I want to be clear about something at the very start, because I think it matters to how the rest of this letter should be read. I am not against renewable energy. My family does not even rely on the main electricity grid; we have chosen to power our own home from renewable sources, because we believe in it. So this is not an objection from someone who has not thought about the climate or who wants other people to carry the cost of the transition. It is the opposite. It is because we have actually built our lives around renewable energy that I feel able to say plainly that this particular proposal is not the answer. The right principle in the wrong place, at the wrong scale, does real and lasting harm, and that is what I believe this application would do.

*The landscape this development would change.* The turbines would stand on an exposed ridgeline at a tip height of around 169 metres. That figure is hard to picture until you set it against something familiar: it is taller than the Great Pyramid of Giza, and there would be a line of these structures strung along a skyline that is, at present, simply hills. They would be visible across a wide area, including from the R585, which is a designated scenic route. People drive that road precisely because of what it looks like. A row of turbines half as tall again as anything else in the view does not sit quietly within a landscape; it reorganises it, and it makes the industrial structure the first thing the eye goes to. The Mealagh Valley is valued for being open, quiet and largely unspoiled, and that quality cannot be recovered once it is gone.

*What is already here, and what is still coming.* This application cannot honestly be assessed on its own. There are already wind farms operating, permitted and proposed across the wider West Cork area, and this is an area that is increasingly surrounded by wind farm development. Each new scheme is presented as though the slate were clean. It is not. The combined visual, acoustic and ecological weight of all of this falls on a relatively small number of valleys and uplands, and ours is being asked to carry a share of it that is out of all proportion to its size. There is a real point at which an area passes from being a rural landscape with some wind energy in it to being a wind energy landscape with some rural character left over. I do not believe the cumulative assessment in this application has been honest about how close the valley already is to that point, or about what it would mean for the experience of living here.

*The tourism economy I depend on.* I am not raising tourism in the abstract. It is my livelihood. A large part of my job is communicating to prospective guests what this place offers, and I can tell you exactly what they come for. Everything Wild Hideaways offers is built on the location: on nature, on remoteness, on the absence of industrial infrastructure. Guests come for the landscape, the quiet, and the feeling of escape from built-up and industrialised environments. They do not come for a view of turning blades and night-time aviation lights on the ridgeline. Fáilte Ireland has consistently identified Ireland's unspoiled scenery as a core driver of demand along the Wild Atlantic Way, and the research record shows that a meaningful proportion of visitors report wind farm developments as a negative influence on their experience of a landscape. For a small valley business whose entire proposition is tranquillity, that is not a distant risk.

I want to be honest about what this means for my own family, because it is part of why I am writing. My job at Wild Hideaways gives me the flexibility to work and to be at home with three small children at the same time, which as a mother matters to me enormously. To lose that job would place a real burden on my family and would affect our ability to give our children the upbringing we want for them. I am genuinely worried about what this development could do to tourism and employment in this valley, and about my own ability to keep providing for my family.

There is also something I find genuinely troubling, and I raise it as someone who knows the business from the inside. The developer's own noise glossary defines a Noise Sensitive Location to include any facility or area of high amenity which, for its proper enjoyment, requires the absence of noise at nuisance levels. Wild Hideaways is a registered eco and wellness retreat whose entire commercial value rests on quiet. By the developer's own definition it is plainly a Noise Sensitive Location. Yet it does not appear anywhere on the developer's list of such locations, and no noise monitoring was carried out near it. A business cannot be captured by a definition and then left out of the assessment that the definition exists to trigger. I would ask the Commission to treat that omission as significant, because it suggests the noise impact on tourism here has simply not been examined.

*Noise, and why I am raising it.* I am raising noise as a formal ground of objection in its own right. Our valley is exactly the kind of terrain in which turbine noise behaves least predictably. Peer-reviewed acoustic modelling of a ridge-mounted turbine emitting into an adjacent valley shows that the received sound level across the valley floor depends heavily on ground type and topography, and that under some conditions the sound carries across the valley with very little of the attenuation that a standard flat-ground assessment would predict (see source A). A ridgeline above an inhabited valley is not the simple, well-behaved case that the developer's modelling tends to assume; it is the difficult case. Beyond that, the wider evidence base is clear that living near operating turbines is associated with annoyance and with disturbed sleep, and that the effect is more pronounced in genuinely quiet rural areas, precisely because there is so little background sound for the turbine noise to disappear into (see source B). Our valley is one of those quiet places. I am also concerned about the construction phase, which would bring extended rock-breaking and heavy traffic over many months, and about whether the baseline noise monitoring has fairly represented how quiet it genuinely is here, particularly at night. I want it on the record that noise is being raised, and raised substantively.

*The wildlife that shares this valley.* The proposed site and its surroundings support upland bird populations. The construction of wind energy infrastructure in upland areas, together with the land use change that comes with it, has been shown to be associated with reduced densities of several bird species in those landscapes (see source C). Turbines, access tracks, borrow pits and drainage do not simply sit on a hillside; they change it. Once a habitat and the flight and feeding patterns that depend on it are disrupted, that damage is slow to undo and often is not undone at all. I would ask that the bird survey effort underpinning this application be examined closely rather than taken at face value.

*The community this would affect.* I am deeply involved in the life of the Mealagh Valley. I volunteer at the community centre, I am involved in the school Board of Management and the Parents Association, and I regularly help with community events and fundraising. This is a close and supportive community, and I am genuinely afraid of what a development on this scale could do to it. I worry that it could drive people away, that families may no longer want to settle here, and that people living closest to the turbines may struggle to sell their homes. I worry that, over time, people will feel forced to move, and that the strong sense of community that exists here now will be quietly worn down. Our own children attend the local school, and it is deeply upsetting to think of large-scale industrial infrastructure coming to dominate the landscape around both our home and the school they walk into every morning. How an area is thought of, as a place to live and to raise a family, is tied directly to the landscape and environment this application proposes to alter. That is a recognised and legitimate planning consideration, not a sentimental one.

*What this place is, for my family.* I first moved to the Mealagh Valley ten years ago, and for the first time in my life I truly felt that I had roots. I moved around a great deal as a child and never really had a lasting sense of home or of place. My husband, by contrast, has spent most

of his life in this valley. Together, over these ten years, we have put an enormous amount of time and energy and resources into building a beautiful, wild, natural space for our family. Everything about our daily life is shaped by the ruralness and the wildlife and the nature around us. The quietness, the open views, the feeling of being away from urbanised areas and massive industrial infrastructure: these are not incidental to our life here, they are why we chose it.

More than anything else, I feel an enormous sadness at the thought of watching the only place that has ever truly felt like home become industrialised. The Mealagh Valley is not simply where we live. It is the foundation of the life my husband and I have worked so hard to build for our children, and the place where we hoped they could grow up connected to nature and to community. I am asking the Commission to weigh that honestly, alongside everything else in this letter.

*What I am asking.* Renewable energy has to be built somewhere, and as a family who powers our own home from it, no one needs to persuade me of that. But it has to be built where it does the least harm, and at a scale the receiving landscape can actually absorb. This proposal fails both tests. Its scale, its siting on a scenic ridgeline above an inhabited valley, its cumulative weight on an area already carrying more than its share, the threat it poses to local tourism and employment, and the gaps in how its noise and tourism impacts have been assessed all point the same way. For the reasons I have set out, I respectfully ask An Coimisiún Pleanála to refuse permission for the proposed Maughanaclea Wind Farm.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and to consider it properly.

Yours faithfully,

Joy Jones-Lane

Ards Beg, Bantry, Co. Cork, P75 R280

#### *Sources cited*

Source A — Van Renterghem, T. (2017). *Sound propagation from a ridge wind turbine across a valley*. Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A, 375, 20160105.

Source B — Onakpoya, I.J., O'Sullivan, J., Thompson, M.J. & Heneghan, C.J. (2015). *The effect of wind turbine noise on sleep and quality of life: a systematic review and meta-analysis of observational studies*. Environment International, 82, 1–9.

Source C — Fernández-Bellón, D., Wilson, M.W., Irwin, S. & O'Halloran, J. (2019). *Effects of development of wind energy and associated changes in land use on bird densities in upland areas*. Conservation Biology, 33(2), 413–422.