

Kate O'Sullivan  
Laharanshermeen  
Mealagh Valley  
Bantry, Co. Cork  
P75 WK40  
22<sup>nd</sup> May 2026

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

Re: Objection to the proposed Maughanaclea wind farm

Planning reference: ACP-324165-26 / 324165

Distance from my home to the nearest proposed turbine: approximately 2 km

A Chara,

My name is Kate O'Sullivan. I live at the above address in Laharanshermeen, in the Mealagh Valley. I'm writing to object to the proposed Maughanaclea wind farm.

As a result of a car accident in January 2023, I've been diagnosed with vestibular migraine and with a condition called Persistent Postural-Perceptual Dizziness, which is shortened to 3PD. I'm on ongoing medication for nausea, vertigo, and pain.

The thing about 3PD that the Commission needs to understand is that it's triggered by movement in my peripheral vision. When things move around me, I feel sick and unsteady. That's not a preference or a worry, it's the clinical description of the condition I live with every day. Slow, persistent motion at the edge of my sight is exactly the kind of stimulus my brain can't tune out from. Add a rotating blade on a ridge two kilometres from my kitchen window and another fourteen of them across the skyline I look at every day and you're describing the worst possible environment for someone with my diagnosis. I wouldn't be able to look out my own window. I wouldn't be able to walk in my own garden. The doctors don't have a cure for this. The only management is to reduce the triggers in my environment. The Commission is being asked to permit the construction of fourteen of them, on the ridge above my home, for the next thirty years.

Noise is the second part of it. I suffer with migraines and noise is a known trigger. I don't need a study to tell me that although there are plenty of them. I know it from my own head. The developer's noise assessment treats this valley like it's flat ground in the midlands. It's not.

The turbines will sit on a ridge above us.

The valley is narrow. Sound carries here in a way you wouldn't believe unless you lived in it.

A neighbour's dog at the far end of the townland can be heard at our kitchen door on a still night. The peer-reviewed research on sound propagation from ridge-mounted turbines across valley terrain (see source A) shows that the standard noise models used in EIARs systematically under-predict what receptors in valleys actually hear, because they don't properly account for ridge-to-valley acoustic focusing or for the wind speed-

up effect at the turbine. The Onakpoya meta-analysis of all the cross-sectional studies done to date (see source B) found that proximity to wind turbines is significantly associated with annoyance and sleep disturbance and that the effect is more prominent in quiet rural areas like ours than in noisy urban ones. The same review also found that visual perception of the turbines is independently correlated with worse outcomes. For someone with my condition, that's not annoyance. It's symptoms. I'm raising noise as a substantive ground of objection in its own right, on the terrain assessment, on night-time noise, on low-frequency noise and amplitude modulation, and on the eighteen to twenty-four months of rock-breaking the construction phase will involve.

I want to be honest about one thing, because I think it matters that an objector isn't just throwing every concern at the wall. Shadow flicker, I don't believe, will affect my own dwelling. The sun is on the other side of us. I mention this only to show the Commission that I'm not exaggerating. The things I'm raising are the things that genuinely worry me, and the things I'm not raising aren't raised because I'm being straight with you. The motion in the peripheral field and the noise are what worry me, because of my diagnosis and because of the shape of this valley. The aviation lighting on top of fourteen turbines worries me too. A red light pulsing on the ridge above the valley every night for the rest of my life isn't a small thing. I'm asked to accept it for the benefit of a private developer.

Then there's the wider point, which I'll put plainly. There are too many of these going up in our local area. Too many in one location, all around the one valley. The cumulative effect on a small place like this hasn't been properly assessed in the developer's documents. Each application is treated as if it stands alone when in reality West Cork is being asked to absorb a disproportionate share of the country's onshore wind development.

The Cork County Development Plan designates this area as a High Value Landscape with strong protection against inappropriate development. Fourteen industrial turbines on a sensitive ridgeline, each one tip-height taller than fifty terraced houses stacked one on top of the other, is the textbook definition of inappropriate development. The Plan isn't a polite suggestion. It's the framework the Commission is bound to respect.

I also want to say something about the birds, because we see them.

The hen harrier is in serious decline in Ireland (see source C). The research on the Meallagh Valley population in particular shows it's one of the last strongholds in the south of the country. The European Court of Justice has held in *Commission v Ireland (C-418/04)* that the protection of Annex I species under the Birds Directive applies outside designated Special Protection Areas, not only within them. Building fourteen 169-metre turbines through one of the last known foraging ranges of a species in decline is not to my mind, a serious response to either biodiversity policy or to climate policy.

Climate action and habitat destruction aren't the same thing and one can't be used to excuse the other. On the dark skies, our valley has one of the darkest night skies left in Ireland (see source D). It's the kind of dark sky you used to see everywhere and now almost nowhere. The Programme for Government has committed to expanding the country's Dark Sky reserves, and West Cork is one of the places that ought to be in line for such designation. Fourteen red aviation lights on the ridge above us would extinguish that resource for thirty years and harm the tourism businesses that already trade on it, including Wild Hideaways next door to us.

On the construction phase, my concerns about access along the R586 are practical. I have hospital and consultant appointments in Cork to manage my condition. The developer's traffic management plan envisages road closures and convoy restrictions on the R586 for the best part of two years. That's the road I rely on. So do the ambulance crews who serve this valley. The plan as drafted doesn't give me confidence that emergency access will be reliable during that period, and the cumulative impact on people who, like me, depend on regular medical contact outside the valley hasn't been seriously thought through.

I'm not against renewable energy. Nobody who lives in a place like this, where we feel the weather every day, is against renewable energy. I'm against putting the wrong infrastructure in the wrong place at the wrong scale, at the cost of irreplaceable landscape, irreplaceable habitat, and the day-to-day health of the people who already live here.

Offshore wind, brownfield wind, and rooftop solar aren't the same thing as fourteen industrial turbines on a

peat-covered ridge above a protected valley. The proper response of the Commission, on the evidence before it, is to refuse permission.

I would ask the Commission to take account of the personal circumstances I've set out, alongside the planning grounds. A medically diagnosed receptor whose symptoms are triggered by exactly the stimuli this development will produce, two kilometres from her own front door, isn't a hypothetical case.

I'm one of the real people who'll live with this decision.

Is mise le meas,

Kate O'Sullivan

#### Sources cited

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