

Re: Planning Reference ACP-324165-26

**10 year planning permission for Maughanaclea Wind Farm consisting of 14 no. wind turbines,
a 110kV substation and 110kV underground cabling connection and associated works**

10 May 2026

Lukas Ahles
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An Coimisiún Pleanála
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To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to object to the proposed Maughanaclea Wind Farm, Ref: ACP-324165-26.

I have grown up in the Mealagh Valley and have lived here my entire life. I care deeply about climate change and understand the need for renewable energy. Our own family home is covered in solar panels. However, I do not believe that every landscape is appropriate for this kind of industrial-scale wind development, and I do not believe Maughanaclea is a suitable location for a project of this scale.

The Mealagh Valley is an environmentally sensitive and peaceful rural landscape with significant biodiversity, dark skies, and cultural value. Growing up here, I have seen first-hand the wildlife that depends on this area, including swallows, birds of prey, bats, hares, frogs, newts, and other species that rely on quiet upland habitats and peatland ecosystems.

The EIAR itself identifies Annex I bird species within the wider study area.¹ Under Article 4(1) of the EU Birds Directive², Annex I species are required to receive special conservation measures concerning their habitats.

I am concerned that the Environmental Impact Assessment underestimates the cumulative environmental impact of this development, particularly when considered alongside other existing and proposed wind farms in West Cork. The surrounding mountains and ridgelines are increasingly being targeted for industrial-scale development, and I believe this risks permanently altering the character of the region.

The Cork County Development Plan specifically requires consideration of cumulative impacts associated with existing and proposed wind energy developments.³

I am also concerned about the impact on dark skies and the peace we enjoy here. One of the most special aspects of living in the Mealagh Valley is the sense of remoteness, quietness, and connection to nature. The proposed turbines and aviation warning lights would fundamentally change the landscape and the tranquility of the night environment.

Brian Espey, Chairperson of Dark Sky Ireland, described the Mealagh Valley as having a “near-pristine environment, close to the conditions in Kerry Dark Sky Reserve and Mayo Dark Sky Park – Ireland’s internationally accredited dark sky areas.”⁴

Research by Bara & Lima (2024) found that turbine aviation lighting can exceed the brightness of prominent stars and even Venus under certain atmospheric conditions.⁵

I am also concerned about the effect this development would have on local tourism businesses like Wild Hideaways, our neighbours whose business depends on the peace, quietness, and Dark Skies of the Mealagh Valley.

¹ EIAR Chapter 6 Biodiversity & Ecology

² EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC)

³ Cork County Development Plan 2022–2028, Section 13.6.3

⁴ Written correspondence to a neighbour dated 25 June 2025, Brian Espey, Chairperson of Dark Sky Ireland

⁵ Bara & Lima, 2024, Quantifying the visual impact of wind farm lights on the nocturnal landscape

In addition, I have concerns regarding the adequacy of the noise assessment. Only one Noise Monitoring Location (NML4) was placed within the Mealagh Valley despite the area's complex glacially-carved terrain and very quiet night-time conditions.⁶

I am not satisfied that this adequately reflects how turbine noise may actually be experienced by residents. Growing up here, I can tell you that sound travels far in this valley. Research regarding wind turbine acoustics in hilly and valley terrain has demonstrated that topography and atmospheric conditions can significantly influence how turbine noise propagates and is experienced at receptor locations.⁷

The developer has failed to meaningfully account for the complex terrain and unusual soundscape of this valley.

I also feel that the community consultation process has been inadequate. This proposal has already caused significant stress and division within the local community, and many residents feel that their concerns have not been properly listened to.

In short – I support renewable energy, but I do not believe sustainability should come at the expense of biodiversity, sensitive peatland habitat, dark skies, or the destruction of the environmental qualities that make rural communities like the Mealagh Valley unique.

Yours sincerely,

Lukas Ahles

⁶ EIAR Chapter 12 Noise & Vibration

⁷ Van Renterghem, T. et al. (2014) "Wind Turbine Noise Propagation Over Complex Terrain and Wind Conditions" Acoustical Society of America / Wind-Watch archive.