

The Honeypot
Cousane
Kealkill
Bantry
Co. Cork
Ireland
P75 YF78
Tel. 083 8926511
Email: bartm.collins@btinternet.com

SID Planning
An Coimisiún Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 V902

May 18th 2026

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Developer: Maughanaclea Ltd / Enerco: SID Application Submitted to An Coimisiún Pleanála

Ref No: ACP-324165-26 / 324165 **Description of Development:** 10-year planning permission for Maughanaclea Wind Farm consisting of 14 no. wind turbines, a 110kV substation and 110kV underground cabling connection and associated work.

Location: Maughanaclea, in townlands of Ardrah, Maughanaclea, Ballynamought, Gortloughra, Cousane, Coomclogh, Derragh, Glanycarney, Keenrath, Derrynacaheeragh, Shiplough, Coolsnaghtig, Mallabracka, Derrylahan, Derreens, Demesne, Dunmanway North, Milleenanannig, and Ballyhalwick, Co. Cork.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I refer to the above planning application and wish to make an observation about the proposed development based on the reasons outlined below. I believe it to be completely inappropriate for this location, resulting in loss of scenic and recreational amenity, habitat, biodiversity, heritage value and also impacts the lives and tourist related businesses of residents and the wider communities. I believe decarbonisation must happen, but that there are better ways to reduce CO2 than intermittent wind energy alone, which by its nature cannot replace reliable baseload electricity without greater efforts to update the grid and storage of surplus energy.

Loss of Amenity and Tourism Impact

The Maughanaclea hills and the foothills of the Shehy mountains at the Cousane Gap are highly valued for their natural beauty, tranquillity, walking trails and cycling routes. The proposed development will degrade this scenic landscape, deterring walkers, cyclists and tourists — all of whom contribute to the local economy and cultural value of the area.

This area contains a plethora of archaeological remains: standing stones, standing rows, forts, famine burials, cairns and castle ruins. Ballynamought and Coomclogh, where proposed turbines

01-06 are located, mapped and logged by the National Monuments Service, shows a number of ancient hut sites, a standing stone and several relict field boundaries have been found and give these places a strong sense of connection to the Irish people living here in the past. This will be a detrimental loss that no mitigation can effectively remedy if the proposed windfarm goes ahead.

The R585 is designated a scenic route, S29 (CCDP), from the Cousane Gap with wide ranging, stunning views down to the Beara Peninsula. According to the Cork County Council Development Plan, it is high value landscape of type 4 rugged ridge peninsula and type 15a Ridged and Peaked uplands with a sense of remoteness. MKO photomontages give little attention to the effect of industrial turbines on this scenic route. I would ask ACP to demand more evidence, particularly showing closer viewpoints of the residential homes close to turbines

1-6.. Below are views taken from the S29 route.



View from junction of L8777/ R585 on S29 west towards Maughanaclea on left, distant views of Beara peninsula, Sugarloaf, Hungry Hill and Caha mountains.



View from S29/ R585 north towards houses 24, 25 and 29 and proposed turbine site on the hills of Ballynamought and

Coomclogh behind. All 3 houses are within 800-1000 metres of turbine 6. The mature forestry is a temporary and small-scale screen.

The CCDP contains the following relevant policy objectives within Section 14.9 in relation to Scenic Routes, Views and Prospects: *GI 14-12: General Views and Prospects Preserve the character of all important views and prospects, particularly sea views, river or lake views, views of unspoilt mountains, upland or coastal landscapes, views of historical or cultural significance (including buildings and townscapes) and views of natural beauty as recognized in the Draft Landscape Strategy.*

MKO states: *the S29 - R585 Kealkill and Cousane Gap. Due to the modest length of the route, low level of tourism in the area and the lack of evidence that wind farms are perceived as negative by tourists, the impact on the tourism value of the route is considered not to be significant.* (5.3.2.3)

The visual intrusion of 14 x 169m turbines would dominate the horizon, permanently altering the scenic character of the area and be visible for several kilometres distant. MKO regards S29 as short, but the scenery and views of mountains continue down to Kealkill village, with beautiful views of Shehy Beg and Douce when travelling Cork bound. MKO are disregarding the road as an important tourist and visitor route to local attractions such as important historical sites, festivals, various rural/coastal tourist accommodations, and coastal routes along the Wild Atlantic Way. The Scenic Routes of west Cork are part of a wider experience of travelling through the traditional, majestic west Cork landscape dotted with farmhouses, and should remain protected and visually unpolluted by windfarm sites.

Also, it should be noted, West Cork values Slow Tourism, a concept for independent visitors who seek peaceful, relaxing locations off the beaten track to enjoy scenic views, nature and dark skies. One business in the Mealagh has accredited Dark Sky status for their accommodation and land, and there is support for a wider area to gain Dark Sky status. The community is pursuing Dark Sky Community accreditation since October 2025. Deputy Christopher O Sullivan TD, minister of State for Nature, Heritage and Biodiversity, has given formal, written support for the initiative as ‘a very positive addition to the region’.

I note that MKO still reference Fáilte Ireland Surveys 2007 and 2012 (CH.5.3.2.4.2) It is important to state that in 2007 there were 60-70 windfarms, in 2012 there were 159 windfarms of much shorter turbines. Now there are 300 windfarms and turbine heights have doubled. I would say that the research and opinions expressed from so long ago are no longer relevant in the situation we find in 2026.

Cumulative Impact of Existing Wind Farms

This area of west Cork already hosts two nearby wind farms — on Shehy Mór itself and in Clogher, as well as recent permissions granted for Dreenacrinnig and Curraglass. Gortloughra windfarm, a few kilometres north-east on Shehy Beg is currently being appealed. The addition of this fifth large-scale development will exacerbate the cumulative impact on our environment, landscape, and health. Planning policy calls for careful consideration of cumulative effects, and in this case, the balance has already tipped heavily. See attached the map showing the cumulative effect to this small area of west Cork. (ref.1). West Cork does not need the visual blight of any more windfarms.

Threat to Local Biodiversity

The area includes upland heath and peat bog, which are fragile habitats under pressure. Further disturbance will drive out wildlife already struggling to survive, including birds, hares, deer, and other species dependent on undisturbed uplands. The presence of borrow pits, heavy construction machinery, and new roads will increase fragmentation and habitat loss. I note that MKO admits: Chapter 6, Table 6-24 (EIA Classification Summary), page 6-131: *"Permanent, significant residual effect" on Upland Blanket Bog even after mitigation.*

The developer claims that the project contributes to positive climate action while admitting that damage caused during construction through excavation and drainage cannot be fully mitigated resulting in carbon loss: MKO Chapter 11, Section 11.4.2, pages 11-23 to 11-24: Acknowledges that *"carbon losses associated with the removal of other carbon-fixing vegetation... have not been quantified"* and that the carbon model *"has been prepared on the basis that restoration will not occur upon decommissioning."* This is most worrying.

Most residents take their water from shallow or deep-water wells, relying on pristine water from the hills. I note that MKO seem to think that there are no private wells within 5km of the sites. Ch. 9.3.14.2 *Private Domestic Wells A search of private well locations on GSI well database (www.gsi.ie) reveal no mapped private wells within 5km of the Proposed Wind Farm site.*

I would ask that ACP challenge this, as no contact appears to have been made with residents.



Pristine hill streams at the site of turbines 01-06 flowing into the Owengar river

We must also consider the contribution of carbon emissions from materials used in the production and construction of turbines, as well as the polluting effects of the hundreds of tonnes of steel, plastics, concrete, and diesel for construction and shipping? Has this been quantified?

Noise, Light Pollution, and Shadow Flicker

Wind turbines of this scale will introduce persistent noise (including low-frequency noise) into an otherwise quiet, rural environment, with a horse shoe series of landforms enclosing the sites.

(MKO Figure 13-3 Topographical Landscape Features Map with identification of 'horseshoe'). I am not fully convinced that the impact of construction noise on residential amenity in these horse shoe landforms has been fully explored and assessed. *Standard modelling is less reliable in terrain where noise can be amplified and channelled, increasing impact for some receptors* (Van Renterghem, 2016).

Shadow flicker and nighttime aviation lighting will also be a new and unpleasant intrusion, affecting quality of life for residents and wildlife. This is especially concerning given the size of the turbines (169m tip height).

The issue of noise is contentious and the cause of legal action resulting in settlements in favour of inhabitants who live in proximity to windfarms. This matter needs to be given serious consideration when planning decisions are being made so the burden of planning errors is not placed on the public. Since 2006, turbines have increased from 60 metres to 175 metres in height with greater spans, noise and vibration, but the updated guidelines for Wind Energy Development have still not been adopted and published. This is unacceptable.

I note the applicant concludes the noise impact as not significant. This is the default position of all windfarm developers. It is the responsibility of the ACP, as the body tasked with scrutinising this application to test this statement.

On the basis of the above points made, I hope my concerns will be taken into account prior to a decision being made on this application. West Cork already has more than its fair share of windfarms.

Yours sincerely

Martin Collins

Ref 1 Map showing the cumulative effect of built and proposed wind farms in this area of West Cork

PROPOSED WIND DEVELOPMENTS - BANTRY & KEALKILL

