

Melanie O'Sullivan
Goulanes
Bantry
Co. Cork
P75 XN61

13 May 2026

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

Re: Objection to the proposed Maughanaclea Wind Farm, ACP-324165-26 / 324165

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to object to the proposed Maughanaclea Wind Farm, which would place six industrial turbines of 169 metres tip height on the ridgeline above our home and above the small national school I have the privilege of leading. I am a school principal, a mother of four, a daughter to elderly parents who live nearby, and the wife of a man who grew up in this valley. Each of these roles, in its own way, has brought me to write this letter. I ask An Coimisiún Pleanála to refuse permission for this development.

My husband Tim is one of the O'Sullivans of Goulanes. His people have lived and worked in this valley for generations. When we made the decision to raise our family here we did not do so by accident; we chose this place over others because of what it is, a small, scenic, deeply rooted rural community, with quiet enough to hear a stream from the road and dark enough at night to see the Milky Way over the ridge. We chose it because Tim's father walked these fields, because my children would grow up where their grandparents could come to the door, because the school down the road is the kind of school you can still walk your child to. Six 169 metre turbines on the ridge above us, each of them taller than the Great Pyramid of Giza, would not just alter that landscape. They would replace it. Our home sits roughly two kilometres from the nearest proposed turbine, well inside the zone in which the developer's own modelling predicts both audible noise and shadow flicker.

I want to speak first, and most carefully, as the principal of Dromclough National School (P75 VA47). Ours is a small school of fifty-two pupils. Among those fifty-two children we have several with a mix of additional needs: autism, ADHD, sensory processing differences. These are children for whom the ordinary sensory environment of a classroom is already a daily piece of work. They have routines that hold them, supports that have been built carefully over years, and tolerances that can be exhausted in a single morning by something as ordinary as a fire alarm or a building site next door. I have watched what happens when those tolerances are exhausted, and I have watched the staff and families who hold those children afterwards. I am asking the Commission to hold that picture in mind when it considers what eighteen to twenty-four months of construction will mean within audible range of our school: rock breaking on a peat-and-bedrock ridge that will echo across

the valley, heavy haulage on the local road, and, once construction ends, the rotating shadows of six turbines visible from the schoolyard. The developer's Environmental Impact Assessment Report does not engage seriously with the population of children I am describing. It treats the school as a receptor on a map. I am telling you that some of the children inside it cannot absorb what is being proposed, and that they have no voice in this process other than the voice of the adults who know them.

I have a long-standing diagnosis of migraine. Flickering light is one of my reliable triggers, and has been for most of my adult life. The developer's shadow flicker modelling places our home within the predicted exceedance zone, in particular our sitting room window and our bedroom window, the two rooms in the house I cannot easily avoid. I do not need a study to tell me what a rotating shadow across a sitting room or bedroom will do to me; my body has been telling me for thirty years. What I do not know, and what no one has been able to tell me, is what the cumulative effect will be of living, day in and day out, in the predicted-exceedance zone of an operating wind farm. I am being asked to wait and find out. That is not a reasonable thing to ask of anyone, but it is particularly unreasonable to ask it of a person whose neurology is already known to react to exactly the stimulus the development will produce.

The noise assessment in the developer's submission does not, in my reading, account properly for the terrain we actually live in. Mealagh Valley is not a flat field; it is a steep-sided basin with the proposed turbines sitting on the ridge above and our houses and our school strung along the lower slopes. The peer-reviewed work of Van Renterghem on sound propagation from ridge-mounted turbines into adjacent valleys shows that this geometry can produce near-free-field propagation across much of the valley floor; in other words, the valley does not protect us; under common atmospheric conditions it can amplify and carry sound that flat-terrain models would discount. The baseline monitoring undertaken for the EIAR was placed in locations that do not represent the quietest parts of the valley, where many homes (including ours) actually sit. The systematic review by Onakpoya et al. (2015) found a clear association between proximity to wind turbines and reduced sleep quality and increased annoyance, with effects extending well beyond the distances typically used in Irish setback discussions. Schmidt and Klokke (2014) reached comparable conclusions. The World Health Organization's 2018 noise guidelines specifically recommend wind turbine night-time exposure of no more than 45 dB L_{night} , on the basis of evidence of cardiovascular and sleep effects below older Irish thresholds. The proposed eighteen to twenty-four months of construction-phase rock breaking is a separate matter altogether: percussive, intermittent, broadband, and entirely characteristic of the kind of noise that will carry across a valley like ours and will be heard from the school. I object to the noise impact of this development on all of these grounds.

I also want to say plainly, as someone who supports climate action and who teaches the children of this community about it, that West Cork is being asked to absorb a wildly disproportionate share of Ireland's onshore wind development. Drive any of the ridge roads of this peninsula and you will see it. None of the electricity from these turbines will be supplied to a single home in our valley; it will be exported to the national grid and, in significant part, to large industrial consumers elsewhere. The community will absorb the noise, the flicker, the lights, the construction traffic, the disruption, and the loss of value to our homes. The benefits will be exported. There is something deeply wrong with that arithmetic, and I do not think it is what climate action is supposed to look like.

On the practical questions: I have two children at college in Waterford and Limerick who travel home most weekends, a third living and working in Waterford, and a fourth still at home preparing

to sit her Leaving Certificate next year. I also have elderly parents nearby who attend hospital appointments in Cork and Bantry. The proposed road closures on the R586 during the construction phase will affect all of these journeys, the weekend trips home, the runs to and from school, and the hospital visits that cannot be rescheduled around a haulage convoy. I have read enough of the developer's traffic management documentation to know that the assurances given are imprecise and that the mitigations described are aspirational. For a family relying on that road for hospital access, "most journeys will be possible most of the time" is not an acceptable answer.

The aviation lighting that the proposed turbines will require, by virtue of their height, will be visible from our home, our garden, and from the school. The Programme for Government 2025 contains a commitment to expand Ireland's Dark Sky reserves. West Cork has been quietly building a dark-sky tourism economy on the back of exactly the night sky this development would extinguish. More personally: for the children at our school, many of whom can name the constellations because they can actually see them, a sky punctuated by red strobes is not a small loss. It is a part of their inheritance that this development would take from them without asking.

I will say something briefly about property and about community. We did not buy our home as an investment, but it is the largest financial commitment we have ever made, and the developer's own consultants concede that wind farms of this scale measurably depress local property values. More painful than that, however, is what this proposal is already doing to the community. Friends have fallen out with friends. People who agreed to grid cables and access on their land are estranged from neighbours who did not. A development that divides a community before a single sod has been turned has already cost us something that the Commission's economic assessment will not capture.

I support the energy transition. I do not support this project, on this ridge, above this valley, above this school. I respectfully ask An Coimisiún Pleanála to refuse permission for the proposed Maughanaclea Wind Farm.

Yours faithfully,

Melanie O'Sullivan

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Email: meltimsullivan@gmail.com

Approximate distance to nearest proposed turbine: 2 km

Sources cited

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.

Schmidt, J.H. & Klokner, M. (2014). *Health effects related to wind turbine noise exposure: a systematic review*. PLoS ONE, 9(12), e114183.

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

World Health Organization, Regional Office for Europe (2018). *Environmental Noise Guidelines for the European Region*. Copenhagen: WHO.