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Co Cork
P75 FF97

12th May 2026

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

To: An Coimisiún Pleanála

Planning Application Reference Number: ACP-324165-26

Applicant: Maughanaclea Ltd / Enerco

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 works

Location: Maughanaclea, County Cork

My name is Patrick Keith-Hynes. I live in Bantry with my wife Meghan.

I am a physicist with a strong interest in the natural environment, landscape and ecology. I spend much of my free time walking, photographing the surrounding hills and fly fishing local rivers and lakes. Some of the most peaceful and restorative experiences I have had since moving here have been standing alone in these landscapes in near complete silence. Through this day to day relationship with the area, I have become increasingly concerned about the scale and cumulative impact of industrial wind energy development proposed across West Cork.

I wish to state clearly that I support renewable energy and recognise the need for climate action. In our own household we have already invested in rooftop solar PV,

battery storage and an electric vehicle. I am therefore not objecting from a position of opposing renewable energy. However, I do not believe that support for renewable energy removes the obligation to critically examine whether a particular development is appropriate in a particular landscape.

The proposed Maughanaclea wind farm represents a major industrial scale intrusion in a highly sensitive upland area. Turbines of 169 metres in height are monumental structures. Due to the elevated ridgeline locations proposed, they would be visible across extensive areas of West Cork and would permanently alter the visual character of the landscape.

The area surrounding Maughanaclea forms part of a wider landscape system extending through Bantry, Kealkill and the Sheep's Head peninsula. These are landscapes of high scenic, ecological and tourism value. The Cork County Development Plan recognises the importance of protecting the scenic and landscape qualities of West Cork's coastal and upland areas and recognises these landscapes as an important tourism and economic asset. The R585 is a designated scenic route and the views along it are genuinely stunning and awe inspiring. I struggle to see how turbines of this scale would not fundamentally damage that experience.

I am also concerned about the cumulative effects of multiple wind farm developments in the wider area. There are already substantial existing wind energy developments across Cork, with further large projects proposed. Within the immediate vicinity of the Maughanaclea, Derreenacrinnig and Curraglass proposals alone, approximately 30 turbines are proposed. Increasingly, the upland ridgelines around Bantry Bay and the Wild Atlantic Way are being targeted for industrial development.

The environmental contradictions within the EIAR are also troubling. The applicant repeatedly claims positive climate benefits while simultaneously acknowledging permanent significant effects on blanket bog habitat and unquantified carbon losses associated with peat disturbance. The documents further confirm that roads, hardstands and turbine foundations may remain in situ following decommissioning. In my opinion, this significantly weakens the credibility of the claimed long-term environmental benefits.

Similarly, the applicant states that high quality habitats have been avoided while also admitting permanent significant residual effects on upland blanket bog habitat. These positions are difficult to reconcile.

The tourism impacts also appear understated. The area lies within the Wild Atlantic Way and contains important walking routes, scenic roads and heritage sites. West Cork's international appeal is strongly linked to its relatively intact and undeveloped landscape character. People do not travel to West Cork to experience industrial infrastructure. They come because the landscape still feels relatively wild, open and unspoilt.

In plain terms, it feels as though what makes West Cork special - its openness, beauty, ecological richness and relative freedom from industrialisation - is slowly being treated as something expendable. Once that landscape character is lost, it cannot really be replaced.

While renewable energy is essential, I believe there also needs to be a broader discussion about how and where energy is generated and who ultimately benefits from these developments.

Ireland's energy strategy increasingly appears focused on supporting rising industrial electricity demand, including large-scale data centre expansion, while rural landscapes carry a disproportionate share of the environmental and visual impacts associated with generation infrastructure.

In my opinion, greater emphasis should be placed on demand reduction, energy efficiency, localised generation and helping households and communities become more energy self-sufficient, rather than relying predominantly on increasingly large industrial developments in environmentally sensitive upland areas.

I am concerned that commercial pressures and private financial interests are becoming a dominant driver of wind energy development, sometimes ahead of proper long-term landscape and ecological protection.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse permission for the proposed development.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Keith-Hynes', written in a cursive style.

Patrick Keith-Hynes