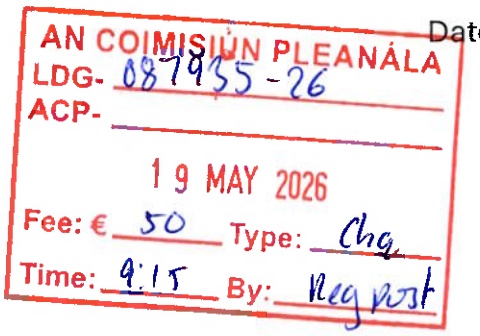
Lackareagh

Kealkil, Bantry

Co Cork

Date 15th May 2026



SID Planning
An Coimisiún Pleanála

64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 V902

Planning Application Reference Number: ACP-324165-26

Applicant: Maughanaclea Ltd / Enerco

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

To Whom It May Concern,

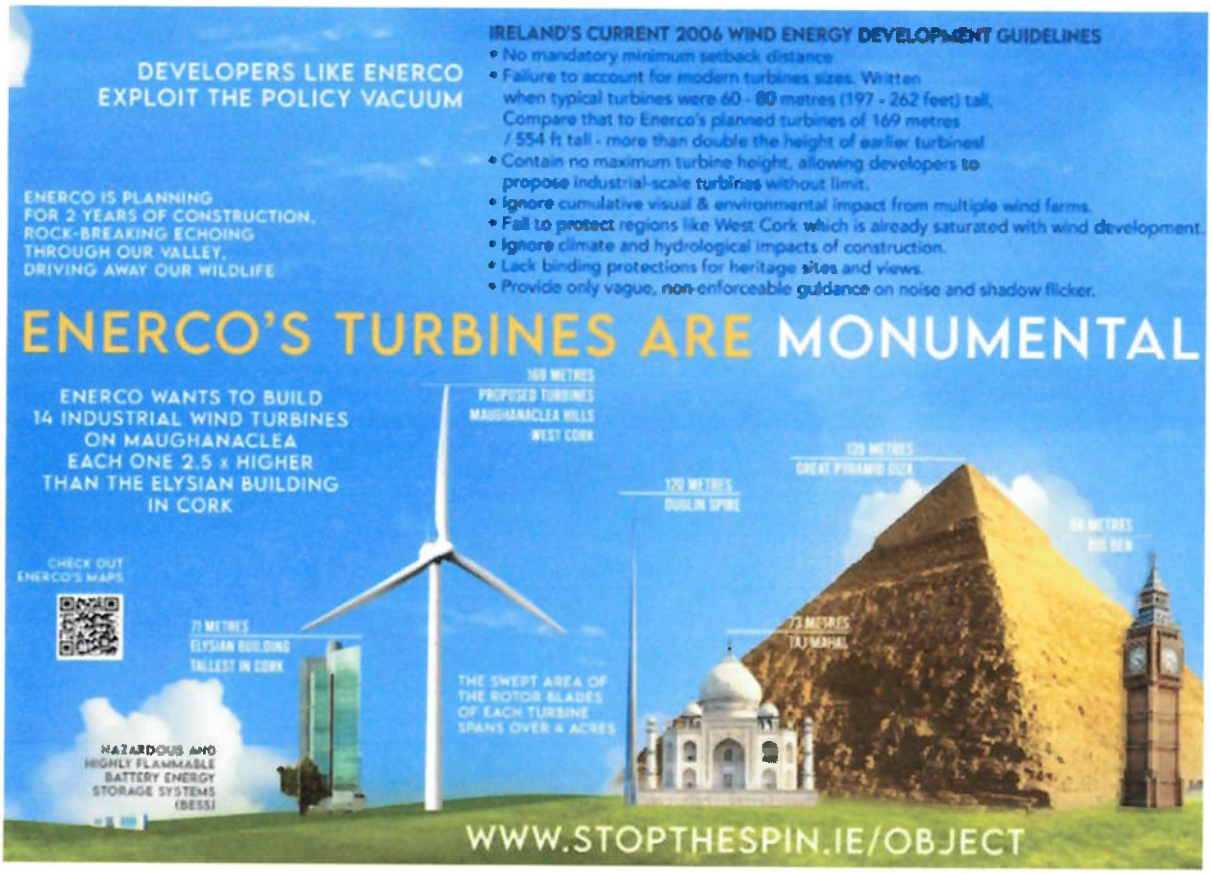
I refer to the above planning application and wish to make the following objections in relation to the proposed development. The following sections outline the primary areas of concern in relation to these proposals.

- Visual
- Cumulmative impact
- Noise
- Dark Skies
- Sensitivity of Waterways
- Local Water Supply
- Turbine route and Grid cable route
- Tourism and Cultural Heritage Along the Grid Route
- Birds

Visual

The proposed turbines are considerable in height (169 meters, surpassing the Great Pyramid of Giza) and may not be consistent with the current rural landscape. They would be highly visible on the horizon and seen from substantial distances, potentially resulting in lasting changes to the character of this relatively untouched region of West Cork. The turbines would be visible from the R585 and R584, which is a designated scenic route. Kealkill and the Mealagh Valley lie within Landscape Character Area 15a: Ridged and Peaked Uplands, which is classified as having High Landscape Value and High Landscape Sensitivity by the Cork County Development Plan. Furthermore, the site is located along the Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's primary tourism trail, promoted internationally as "a place to experience nature at its wildest."

This area falls under the Fáilte Ireland West Cork Coast Destination and Experience Development Plan (DEDP), a government-authorized tourism strategy. The Cork County Development Plan identifies this locality as "Open to Consideration" for wind energy development, rather than "Acceptable in Principle." Consequently, it is incumbent upon the developer to demonstrate that any negative effects on tourism, landscape, and amenity can be mitigated or prevented.



Kindly examine the heights depicted in the image, which effectively illustrates the scale of the turbines. Consider the potential impact these structures may have on the landscape over time.

When travelling along the R585 and R584, an impressive vista emerges at Cousane Gap and the Pass of Keimaneigh, where visitors will be first greeted by the striking presence of wind turbines if they are approved.

I am also concerned about the visual impact from my residence, as both the front and back of my property will be affected. However, the EIAR does not include photomontages that would allow me to assess how these structures will appear from my home.

Image taken just at the top of Keimaneigh on the R584 looking towards the proposed turbine location

Cumulative Impact

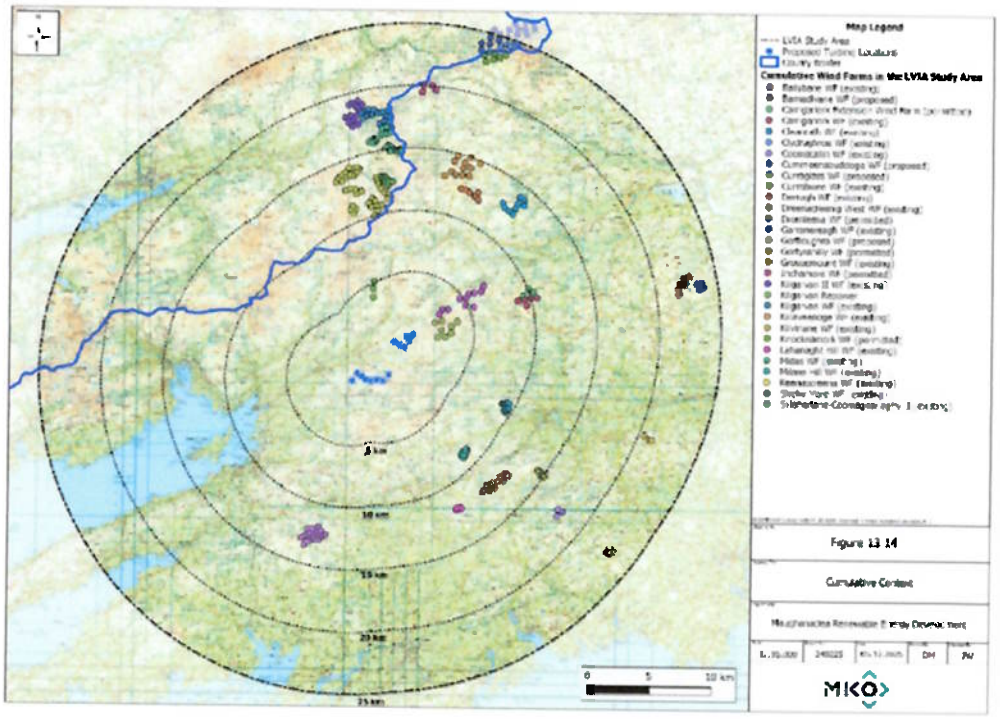
The placement of wind turbines on opposing ridgelines is expected to generate a marked sense of enclosure for residents and road users within the valleys. Rather than benefitting from unobstructed rural views, individuals would encounter turbines on both sides, thereby significantly modifying the area's character and reducing its unique sense of place. The dynamic presence of turbines across skylines would gradually render the wind energy infrastructure the prevailing element of the landscape, superseding its natural features.

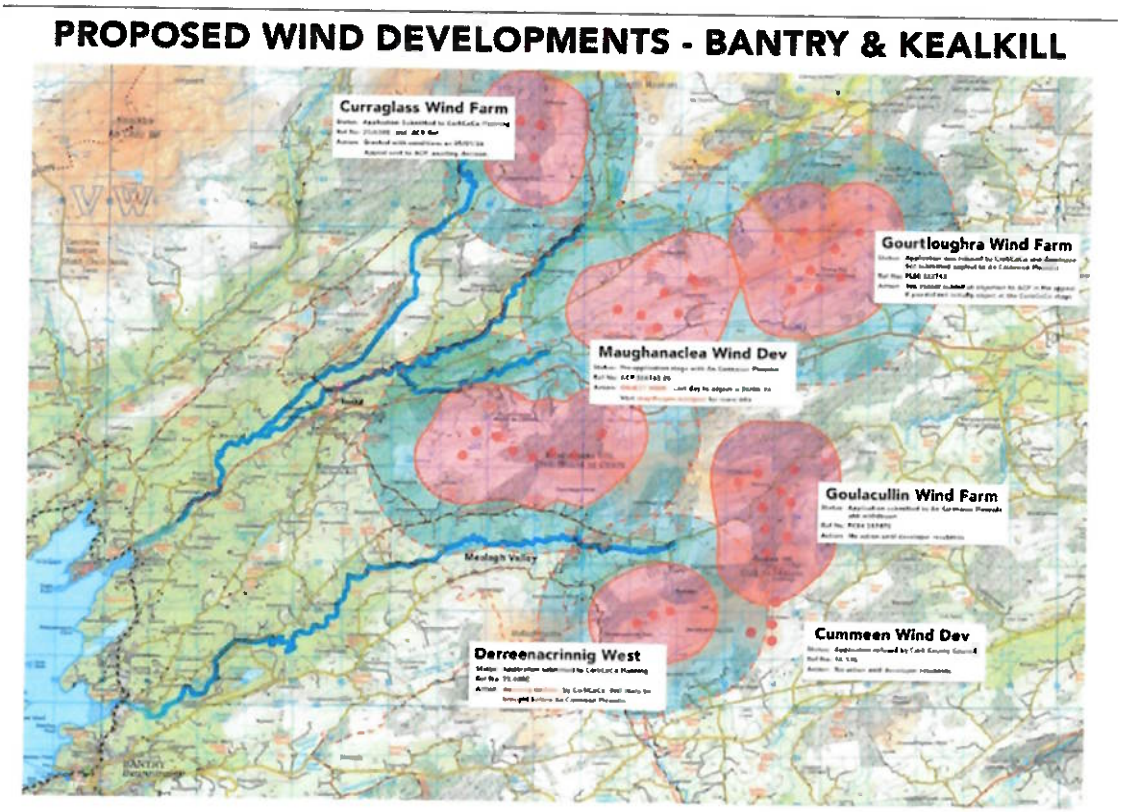
It is noteworthy that the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) does not appear to sufficiently examine this combined visual effect especially views from the R584 and popular cycle route L8776. There is an evident absence of updated cumulative photomontages and a detailed evaluation of sequential and composite views from impacted roadways and residential areas. In the absence of such analysis, it

becomes challenging to accurately appreciate or evaluate the full scope of cumulative landscape and visual impacts.

The chart above outlines the progress achieved by various counties in fulfilling their renewable energy commitments. While certain counties have successfully met their obligations, others have yet to commence renewable energy initiatives. Furthermore, Kealkill is anticipated to support up to 300 turbines within a 25 km radius, leading to a notable concentration of turbines in the region. This is depicted in the image below, sourced from EIAR

FIGURE 14: CUMULATIVE CONTEXT MAP[41]





An image depicting the proposed installation of wind turbines in the Kealkill area.

Noise

I am concerned that the assessment of construction noise impacts on residential amenity may lack completeness and accuracy. I respectfully request that the Commission acknowledge the following points:

- Average noise levels may not adequately represent actual disturbances.
- An extensive area of residences could be affected.
- Terrain and cumulative effects have the potential to amplify impacts.
- Appropriate attention should be given to the possible reduction in residential amenity.

Although the developer asserts that predicted noise levels are within permissible limits, these estimates rely on averaged measurements which may not accurately represent the actual impact of construction noise.

Construction operations generate brief but intense sounds from equipment such as rock breakers, excavators, and trucks. These episodic noises can be significantly more disruptive than average readings indicate.

Noise associated with turbine base works will be intermittent yet noticeable, including:

- Sudden bursts from rock breaking and heavy machinery
- Continuous activity from excavators, rollers, and vehicles
- Works progressing across various locations, thereby prolonging the overall period of disruption.
- Increased traffic on the road
- The overall effects noise will have on local wildlife and habitats.

Dark Skies

I greatly value the opportunity to stargaze at my family home, particularly after having lived in Dublin where such experiences are far less accessible. From this location, I have been able to observe rare natural events, including the aurora borealis and notable planetary alignments. The introduction of wind turbines would significantly diminish this experience, as the associated light and visual intrusion would compromise the dark-sky environment that makes these observations possible.

In addition, the visual impact of turbines would extend far beyond the immediate area. They would be clearly visible from Bantry Bay, a destination visited each summer by cruise ships and private yachts. This alteration of the landscape could have a

substantial negative effect on tourism, which relies heavily on the region's unspoiled scenic character.

Sensitivity of Waterways

A significant issue associated with the proposed wind farm development is the potential increase in water run-off from the construction site. Most of the water in this location flows into the Owngar and Owvane River. The Owngar and Owvane River are fast-flowing rivers, and its catchment area is particularly vulnerable, as West Cork receives high annual rainfall.

This region already faces multiple flash flooding incidents each year. The introduction of further construction activities, especially those that require substantial drainage works, raises concerns that these issues could be intensified. The proposed development could lead to an increase in surface water run-off and disrupt the existing natural drainage patterns. Such disturbances may not only occur during construction but could also have long-term impacts well beyond the first phase. The EIAR lacks a flood risk assessment for lower Kealkill, even though Ballylickey frequently experiences property damage and traffic disruptions when the Owvane river overflows.

Video of flooding R584 Ballylickey area, 3rd October 2025 https://vm.tiktok.com/ZNd3tn669/

Alterations to water flow brought by the project are likely to increase both the frequency and severity of flash flooding events in the local area this in turn could have a serious risk to the community and the surrounding environment. In recent times, flooding has raised concerns regarding local sports pitches, bridges, roadways, and homes, and has resulted in the loss of livestock.

Image left: showing Flooding on Kealkill sports field 5th of October 2024.

(image Bay Rovers AFC). lower Kealkill valley farmland.

Flooding from upper Owvane river Kealkill 2024 before and after

The Owngar and Owvane Rivers are critical waterways in the region, valued for their role within the community. Historically, these rivers have been noted for the fishing of Brown Trout and red list Atlantic Salmon. They provide vital spawning beds for both species as well as supporting a diverse range of aquatic life such as Alantic Eels and the presence of freshwater pearl mussel further downstream.

In addition to their biodiversity value, these rivers are essential water sources for the surrounding agricultural community. Many residents' livelihoods rely on the ongoing health and accessibility of these waters. Any negative impacts, whether through pollution, changes in natural water flow, or disruption to habitats would have consequences for both the environment and the people living in the area.

Local Water Supply

I have concerns about the water supply to my home from the Maughanaclea Kealkill reservoir. As a result of high levels of chlorine in the water we purchase bottled water for consumption. this is a concern to me as it has been noted that from time to time the water supply has high levels of Trihalomethanes (THMS)

The EIAR fails to adequately assess impacts on the Kealkill Public Water Supply.

While Volume 3, Appendix 2-2 (Scoping Responses) records Uisce Éireann's confirmation that the development lies within the Zone 1 catchment of the Kealkill abstraction and upstream of the intake, the main EIAR contains no clear, Kealkill-specific impact assessment or mitigation.

Given the high sensitivity of a Zone 1 drinking water source, this represents a material deficiency in the EIAR, contrary to the precautionary principle and EIA requirements.

Turbine route and Grid cable route

The EIAR fails to adequately assess the traffic and road-safety impacts of turbine deliveries, construction HGVs, and grid-cable installation works. These activities will require abnormal loads, frequent heavy-goods movements, and extended traffic management on commuter routes, yet the EIAR provides no credible analysis of delays, journey-time reliability, or risks to daily road users.

There is no route-specific safety assessment, despite the narrow and deteriorating condition of the R585. Recent incidents of lorries tipping into verges between Shanlaragh and Coppeen demonstrate that this road is already unsafe for heavy vehicles, even before construction traffic is added.

The EIAR does not assess impacts during peak commuter periods, nor does it consider the cumulative effects of overlapping turbine deliveries, road works, and grid-cable installation. Without detailed mitigation, enforceable traffic controls, or a realistic safety plan, the EIAR does not provide a sufficient basis to conclude that traffic disruption and commuter safety risks can be acceptably managed.

Protected Species and Grid Connection Route

The EIAR does not provide a route-specific ecological assessment for the proposed grid connection, despite legal obligations under the EU Habitats Directive, Birds Directive, and Wildlife Acts 1976–2023. Works such as trenching, vegetation clearance, construction traffic, and temporary lighting have clear potential to disturb or damage habitat used by Annex IV species including bats and otters, as well as legally protected nesting birds.

No detailed surveys, mapping of sensitive receptors, or species-specific mitigation measures are presented. As a result, the EIAR does not demonstrate compliance with strict species-protection requirements or the precautionary principle.

In addition, red squirrels are regularly observed along the L4909 and R585 near Derragh and Derragh Bridge, yet the EIAR contains no assessment of potential disturbance or habitat fragmentation for this protected species. This omission further undermines the adequacy of the ecological evaluation.

In the absence of robust survey data and enforceable mitigation, the EIAR does not provide a credible basis to conclude that protected species along the grid route will be safeguarded.

Tourism and Cultural Heritage Along the Grid Route

It should also be noted that the proposed grid-connection route passes through Mallabracka, the townland of the homeplace of Sam Maguire, a nationally significant GAA figure whose restored homestead is open to visitors and functions as a recognised local tourism attraction. Construction works, including trenching, traffic management, and HGV movements, will cause delays, noise, and distraction for visitors accessing this site. The EIAR does not assess these tourism impacts, nor does it consider the reputational and economic consequences of disrupting access to a popular cultural heritage destination.

Birds

I have real concerns about the number of protected bird species in the Kealkill area, including some that are actually within the wind farm site. Many of these birds are on the Red List under Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (BoCCI 4: 2020–2026). Red-listed birds are the ones of highest conservation concern because their numbers have dropped severely, their range has shrunk, or their overall conservation status is poor.

Even though Red-listing is a scientific warning rather than a legal designation, it's important to point out that all wild birds in Ireland are strictly protected under the EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) and the Wildlife Acts 1976–2023. This includes every species I mention below.

Red listed birds listed on the EIAR are the following Meadow Pipit, Barn Owl, Long-eared Owl, Hen Harrier, White-tailed Eagle, Red Grouse, Golden Plover, Curlew, Goldeneye, Grey Wagtail and Ring Ouzel.

Some of these are ground-nesting birds, which makes them especially vulnerable to disturbance from construction works. For example:

- Red Grouse are actually on the site
- Curlew have been recorded only a short distance away
- Meadow Pipits are nesting on the site and are also an important host species for the Cuckoo, which is Amber-listed

The EIAR does not properly acknowledge or assess the presence of these sensitive species, and it does not explain how they would be protected during construction. That is a serious gap in the ecological assessment.

Other examples of birds nearby sensitive to wind turbines are as follows:

Goshawk are present very close to the Maughanaclea proposed site, which are a rare amber listed bird in Ireland and mostly found in coniferous woodland and are protected under the Irish Wildlife Act. They're hunting range is approximately 5km and sometimes further in winter months. The Goshawk in Kealkill is well within the turbine area as noted in the map below taken from the Maughanaclea EIAR Appendix 7-4 Survey Data - F - 2026.03.26 – 240225. They fly at high speeds of up to 40km per hour and its possible for a Goshawk to collide with a turbine blade.

Map showing goshawk near taken from the EIAR

Peregrine Falcon are a protected species in Ireland and its estimated that there is 400-450 breeding pairs in Ireland. They can hunt daily from 2-6 km, and it can reach speeds of up to 320km when hunting. The map in the EIAR Appendix 7-4 Survey Data - F - 2026.03.26 – 240225 shows that a peregrine falcon is located within the proposed wind farm location and could possibly collide with turbine blades.

Map showing peregrine falcon taken from the EIAR

I also wish to raise concerns regarding the potential impact of the proposed development on the **White-tailed Eagle.** This species remains extremely vulnerable in Ireland, with only 17 known breeding pairs nationally. The Kealkill area is regularly used by White-tailed Eagles for foraging and movement, and sightings are well-documented locally. Given the very small population and the species' sensitivity to disturbance and collision risk, any loss of even a single adult bird would have a disproportionate impact on national conservation efforts. Recent confirmed turbine-related eagle deaths elsewhere in Ireland highlight the real risks posed by wind-energy infrastructure. For these reasons, I believe the precautionary principle must apply, and the potential impacts on this Annex I species require far more robust assessment before any permission can be considered.

Conclusion

After examining everything this project involves, It is my honest opinion that the Maughanaclea Wind Farm should not be approved. The risks are far too large, especially for our water supply and the surrounding landscape. This is a sensitive area with peat, streams, wildlife, and the catchment for the Kealkill water scheme. It is not the kind of place where you can dig, blast, and drain without consequences.

There are still too many unanswered questions about how the work would affect water quality, peat stability, local habitats, and character of the Shehy Mountains. Once these things are damaged, they can't be replaced. It is completely unacceptable to the people who live here who rely on the water or appreciate the scenery and peacefulness that our locality offers.

Between the environmental risks, the gaps in the assessments, and the potential impact on tourism and everyday life in the area, it just doesn't feel like a safe or sensible project. Until the developers can prove clearly and reliably that none of these issues will happen, I don't believe this wind farm should get planning approval.

Yours sincerely

Rachel O' Leary