

Mrs S Milner  
95 Glentrammon Rd  
Orpington  
Kent BR6 6DQ  
United Kingdom

21<sup>st</sup> May 2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: Observation on Proposed Maughanaclea Wind Farm (Case Reference 324165)**

I wish to submit an observation objecting to the proposed Maughanaclea Wind Farm development.

Although I do not currently reside in the immediate area, I intend to relocate to West Cork in the future and make it my permanent home. The area's unique landscape, tranquillity, natural beauty and heritage are among the reasons for that decision. For this reason, I have a strong interest in ensuring that these qualities are protected for future generations.

While I support the development of renewable energy and recognise its importance in helping Ireland meet its climate objectives, I have serious concerns regarding the suitability of this particular location for a development of this scale.

My strongest concerns relate to:

- The significant landscape and cumulative visual impact of 14 turbines measuring approximately 169 metres in height;
- The environmental risks associated with peatland disturbance, carbon release, peat stability and impacts on biodiversity;
- The effect on residential amenity, tranquillity and quality of life for nearby residents.

While I support renewable energy development in principle, I do not believe that the Maughanaclea site is an appropriate location for a development of this scale and intensity.

**1. Landscape, Visual Impact and Cumulative Effects**

My principal concern relates to the landscape and visual impact of this proposal.

The proposed turbines, with a tip height of approximately 169 metres, would constitute highly prominent structures within the West Cork landscape. Due to their scale, elevated siting and visibility across a wide area, they would have a significant and lasting impact on the visual amenity and rural character of the area.

In particular, I am concerned about the effect on views from the R585, a designated scenic route protected under the Cork County Development Plan due to its important landscape views and scenic value. The landscape currently derives much of its value from its open, natural and relatively undeveloped character. The introduction of turbines of this height would fundamentally alter important views and change the experience of the landscape for residents and visitors alike.

The development would also be visible within a wider landscape that contributes to the experience of visitors travelling through West Cork and accessing the Wild Atlantic Way. The scenic quality of this area is one of its defining characteristics and forms an important part of both its cultural identity and tourism appeal. The introduction of turbines of this scale would permanently alter the character of the landscape and diminish the sense of openness and natural beauty that currently exists.

I am also concerned about the cumulative impact of the proposal. The wider area already contains existing wind energy developments, and the addition of a further 14 turbines would add substantially to the level of wind energy infrastructure visible within the landscape. While individual developments may be considered acceptable in isolation, the cumulative effect of multiple wind farms risks creating an increasingly industrialised landscape and diminishing the scenic qualities for which West Cork is valued.

I therefore request that An Coimisiún Pleanála give particular consideration to the cumulative landscape and visual effects of this proposal, both on its own and in combination with existing and permitted wind energy developments in the surrounding area.

## **2. Residential Amenity**

My second concern relates to the impact that a development of this scale would have on people living in the surrounding area.

The proposed turbines are exceptionally large structures and would become a dominant feature of the local environment. For residents living nearby, their size, constant movement and visibility would have a significant effect on the enjoyment of their homes and surroundings.

This part of West Cork is valued for its peaceful rural character, and I am concerned that the introduction of 14 turbines of this scale would erode that sense of tranquillity. The area would be transformed from a quiet rural landscape into one increasingly influenced by large-scale industrial infrastructure.

I am also concerned about the potential effects of turbine noise and shadow flicker on nearby residents. While mitigation measures may be proposed, the Board should carefully consider the cumulative impact of repeated shadow flicker events, the visual disturbance caused by rotating blades, and the long-term effect of turbine noise on the comfort, wellbeing and quality of life of those living closest to the development.

Given the number and scale of the proposed turbines, I believe particular attention should be paid to ensuring that residential amenity is adequately protected and that the burden placed on nearby households is not disproportionate to the benefits of the development.

## **3. Environmental Impact: Peatland, Carbon Storage, Biodiversity and Construction Impacts**

My third and perhaps most significant concern relates to the potential environmental impacts of the proposed development, both during construction and throughout its operational life.

While the project is presented as a renewable energy development intended to contribute to Ireland's climate objectives, it is important that the full environmental cost of the development

is properly considered. The proposed site includes peat soils and requires substantial excavation, drainage works, borrow pits, access roads and turbine foundations. Peatlands are an important carbon store, and disturbance of peat can result in the release of significant quantities of stored carbon into the atmosphere.

I am also concerned about peat stability. Experience elsewhere in Ireland has demonstrated that disturbance of peatland can have serious environmental consequences if not managed correctly. The Derrybrien Wind Farm Peat Slide highlighted the potential risks associated with large-scale construction in sensitive peatland environments. While every site is different, this precedent demonstrates the importance of applying the highest level of scrutiny to peat management, drainage proposals and slope stability assessments.

In addition, I have concerns regarding the impact on biodiversity and protected species. The ornithological assessment for the project identifies a number of species of conservation concern within the wider area, including the Hen Harrier, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Chough and Golden Plover. I am concerned that the proposed ridgeline siting of fourteen turbines, each approximately 169 metres in height, could increase collision risk for birds of prey and other protected species, while also disrupting established feeding, breeding and movement patterns. The development may also affect bats and other wildlife through habitat disturbance and fragmentation during both construction and operation.

I am further concerned about the scale of the construction phase required to deliver this project. Construction would involve prolonged periods of heavy and abnormal-load vehicle movements on narrow rural roads, many of which were not designed for this level of traffic. The R585 is an important route connecting communities across West Cork and carries significant volumes of local and commercial traffic. The movement of turbine components, construction equipment and heavy goods vehicles has the potential to create road safety concerns, traffic disruption and lasting impacts on local infrastructure.

In particular, I am concerned about the potential for damage to rural roads, bridges, drainage systems, verges, stone walls, hedgerows and other boundary features that contribute to the character of the area. Any deterioration of this infrastructure could have long-term consequences long after the construction phase has ended.

The proposal also includes significant underground cabling and associated trenching works between the wind farm and the wider electricity network. Given the scale and extent of this infrastructure, I request that An Coimisiún Pleanála carefully consider the cumulative environmental impacts of these works, including potential impacts on habitats, drainage patterns, landscape features and existing utility infrastructure.

Given the scale of the proposal and the sensitivity of the receiving environment, I respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála carefully examine whether the proposed mitigation measures are sufficient to avoid significant impacts on peatland, carbon storage, protected species, biodiversity, local infrastructure and the wider environment.

#### **4. Archaeology and Cultural Heritage**

My fourth concern relates to the potential impact of the proposed development on archaeology and cultural heritage.

West Cork has a rich archaeological heritage and contains a significant number of recorded monuments and sites of historical importance. Upland peatland areas can also preserve previously undiscovered archaeological features and artefacts which may not yet be identified in existing records. Given the scale of excavation and ground disturbance required for this development, there is a risk that unknown archaeological remains could be damaged or lost.

In addition, I am concerned that the scale and prominence of the proposed turbines could adversely affect the setting, character and appreciation of known archaeological and cultural heritage sites within the wider landscape. The visual relationship between these historic monuments and their surrounding environment forms an important part of their significance, and this should be carefully considered when assessing the proposal.

## **5. Tourism and the Local Economy**

My final concern relates to the potential impact of the proposed development on tourism and the wider local economy.

West Cork is renowned for its exceptional natural beauty, dramatic landscapes, rolling hills and scenic routes, attracting visitors from across Ireland and abroad. The region's tourism offering is closely linked to the quality of its landscape, its rural character and the sense of tranquillity that visitors experience when travelling through the area.

The local economy benefits significantly from this tourism appeal, particularly through hospitality, accommodation, food, recreation and other visitor-related businesses. I am concerned that the introduction of 14 turbines, each approximately 169 metres in height, together with associated infrastructure, would have a detrimental impact on the visual character of the landscape and could undermine one of the area's greatest assets.

Of particular concern is the visibility of the development from routes used by visitors travelling through West Cork and accessing the Wild Atlantic Way. The cumulative presence of existing and proposed wind energy developments risks eroding the scenic qualities that make this part of Ireland such an attractive destination.

While renewable energy development is important, I believe that developments of this scale should be directed towards locations where they can be accommodated without compromising the landscape, tourism value and economic sustainability of areas that depend heavily on their natural environment.

## **Conclusion**

For the reasons outlined above, I respectfully submit that the proposed Maughanaclea Wind Farm would have significant adverse impacts on the landscape, residential amenity, environment, cultural heritage and tourism value of the area.

In particular, I believe the proposal would result in an unacceptable visual and cumulative impact on the West Cork landscape, create significant environmental concerns relating to peatland disturbance and biodiversity, and adversely affect the amenity enjoyed by nearby residents and visitors.

While I support renewable energy development in principle, I do not believe that this highly sensitive location is suitable for a development of this scale.

I therefore respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse permission for the proposed development.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Milner', written in a cursive style.

Mrs S Milner