



Outlook

Sara Ramsden Hallett re requested attachment

From Sara Ramsden <zappamuffin2017@gmail.com>

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To SIDS <sids@pleanala.ie>

 1 attachment (15 KB)

Sara_Ramsden-Hallett_Section_4.3.2_Response.pdf;

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PDF attachment as requested. Please let me know you've received and all is well. I got a little confused over my files ... you nearly ended up with my train tickets!!

Regards

Sara

Sara Ramsden-Hallett
Maulakieve, Bantry, Co. Cork, P75 ET71

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

Re: Maughanaclea Renewable Energy Development (ACP-324165-26)
Response to Section 4.3.2 (Nature Conservation) of the applicant's Response to Observations

Dear Sir or Madam,

I write in reply to the Commission's letter of 14 August 2026, which invited observations on the applicant's Response to Observations, received by the Commission on 14 July 2026, confined to Section 4.3.2 (Nature Conservation). I will keep within that boundary. My objection of May 2026 remains before the Commission in full — its grounds on landscape, lighting, cumulative burden and noise included — and nothing in this response should be read as retreating from any of it.

I am a smallholder at Maulakieve, some four kilometres from the nearest proposed turbine, and I have lived with this valley's weather, its quiet and its night sky for ten years. When I wrote in May, the point I found hardest to accept was the aviation lighting, and I cited two sources on it: the NatureScot guidance on aviation lighting impact assessment, and the work of Bará and Lima on wind farm lights in the nocturnal landscape. I have now read Section 4.3.2 to see what the applicant makes of the night it proposes to illuminate. The answer is: nothing at all.

The lit ridge and the unexamined night

The applicant confirms, at Section 4.2 (page 34) of its Response, that it is agreeable to the Department of Defence condition requiring every one of the fourteen turbines to carry Type C, medium-intensity, fixed red obstacle lighting of a minimum 2,000 candela, visible in all directions and operational 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The consented Dreenacreenig West scheme on the southern side of the valley confirms the same 2,000-candela fixed red lighting on all three of its turbines (its EIAR, Section 13.8.5). Between them, the two ridgelines that hold this valley are to be lit red from dusk to dawn, permanently.

In my objection I treated those lights chiefly as a human loss — the sky pockmarked with red, as I put it then. Section 4.3.2 obliges me to point out the other half of the harm, because the applicant has not. NatureScot — the same body whose lighting guidance I cited in May — has published an information note, "The Effect of Aviation Obstruction Lighting on Birds at Wind Turbines, Communication Towers and Other Structures," which identifies phototaxis, the attraction of birds to artificial light, as the principal ecological concern with obstruction lighting of this kind. The applicant's Nature Conservation response does not cite that note, does not use the word, and does not consider the question. And it could not have considered it with data even

if it had wished to, because every bird survey underpinning Section 4.3.2 was carried out in daylight. Not one hour of nocturnal flight activity has been recorded for a site that is to be lit, in all directions, every night, for decades. A conclusion of no significant effect on the wildlife of the night, reached without ever once observing the night, is not a conclusion. It is an assumption wearing the costume of one.

The valley counted, and not counted

In May I wrote that each new development in West Cork is assessed as if it arrived on a blank canvas. Section 4.3.2 provides an unusually plain illustration. In its cumulative bird assessments, the applicant includes the Dreenacreenig West scheme — naming it at pages 40 to 43 in the assessments for kestrel, red grouse, snipe, buzzard and sparrowhawk. Yet that same scheme is excluded from the cumulative assessments in the EIAR's landscape chapter, its noise chapter and its project description. A neighbouring wind farm that is real when snipe are being counted, and unreal when landscape and noise are being weighed, is not an assessment methodology; it is an accounting convenience. The Development Applications Unit, in its submission on this case (SID-CK-2026-011, 25 May 2026), warned that the applicant's habit of finding no individual significance and inferring no cumulative significance "misses the point of cumulative impact and in combination effects," and that displacement effects are "often not calculated for or mitigated for." The birds that live between these two ridges will experience both developments at once, lit at both ends of their sky. No chapter of this application has ever considered that totality.

What I ask

I said in May that this development is about the money to be made in the present gold rush in onshore wind, at the long-term cost of the very essence of County Cork, and nothing in Section 4.3.2 has moved me from that view. I want to be careful, therefore, about what I am asking for, because it is not further studies. The absence of nocturnal data and the chapter-by-chapter treatment of the neighbouring wind farm are not oversights awaiting correction; they are the demonstration that this applicant's reassurances on nature conservation cannot carry weight. And were the missing work done, and done impeccably, my position would be unchanged: there is no assessment that makes fourteen lit industrial structures the right thing to stand over this valley, and the community that lives here does not want them on any terms. Sustainable power and the living landscape can be reconciled, but only in a climate of care, consideration and honesty — and this application has now shown, in its own pages, that it offers none of the three. I respectfully ask An Coimisiún Pleanála to refuse permission.

I would be grateful if receipt of this response could be acknowledged.

Yours faithfully,

Sara Ramsden-Hallett

Maulakieve, Bantry, Co. Cork, P75 ET71