

Living Across the Bay: Residential Amenity, Road Safety and Shadow Flicker Concerns

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Our Perspective

We are residents of West Ballycastle (Killerduff) and have lived overlooking the bay towards Lacken Hill and the proposed Tirawley Wind Farm location for many years.

The landscape to the east forms part of our daily lives. Every morning we see the sun rise behind the hills of Lacken and Carrowmore and every evening we look across one of the most scenic views in North Mayo.

It is from this perspective that we wish to express our concerns regarding the proposed wind farm development.

We believe that the location proposed for this development is totally inappropriate and would have significant consequences for residents, visitors and road users throughout the wider Ballycastle area.

The Landscape We Experience Every Day

One of the reasons we chose to live in this area is because of the beauty of the landscape. The views across the bay towards Lacken Hill, Carrowmore and the surrounding uplands are a defining feature of the area. Visitors frequently stop along local roads and viewpoints to photograph the scenery. Walkers, cyclists and tourists travelling between Ballycastle, Downpatrick Head and the Céide Fields experience these same views throughout the year.

At present the landscape remains largely undeveloped and retains a sense of openness and tranquillity that is becoming increasingly rare. The proposed development would introduce multiple large-scale turbines onto a skyline that currently forms a natural backdrop to the area. In our opinion, this would significantly alter the character of the landscape and would become a dominant visual feature visible from a large portion of West Ballycastle and the surrounding coastline.

Concerns Regarding Shadow Flicker and Glare

Our greatest concern relates to the relationship between the proposed turbine locations and the rising sun. Having lived in this location for many years, we are very familiar with how the sun moves across the hills during the morning period. At certain times of the year the sun rises directly behind the ridgeline where the turbines are proposed. This alignment is particularly noticeable from Ballyknock, Doonfeeney, West Ballycastle and multiple surrounding parishes.

The concern is not simply the presence of turbines.

The concern is the interaction between moving turbine blades and low-angle sunlight. The repetitive interruption of sunlight by rotating blades has the potential to create shadow flicker effects that may affect homes, roads, tourism facilities and outdoor recreational areas.

Similarly, reflected sunlight from turbine blades may contribute to glint and glare effects during particular weather conditions. While these effects are often discussed in technical reports, they are very real concerns for people who live in the receiving environment and experience these viewing conditions on a daily basis.

Road Safety Concerns

We are particularly concerned about the implications for road safety.

The R314 serves as one of the main routes through North Mayo and is used extensively by local residents, tourists, cyclists, agricultural traffic and commercial vehicles.

Many sections of this route already experience periods of intense morning sunlight, particularly during autumn and winter months when the sun remains low on the horizon. Drivers travelling eastwards towards Ballycastle can find themselves driving directly into the rising sun for considerable distances. The introduction of multiple rotating turbine blades into this visual corridor has the potential to create additional distraction through flicker, blade movement and reflected light.

Whilst road safety assessments may have been undertaken as part of the planning process, we remain concerned that the lived experience of driving these roads every day cannot be fully replicated through modelling exercises alone. The combination of direct sunlight, rotating blades and moving shadows has the potential to create difficult visual conditions for motorists and a hazard to both the many tourists that visit our area and the locals.

This concern extends not only to local residents but also to visitors who may be unfamiliar with the roads and who increasingly travel to the area as part of the Wild Atlantic Way experience.

Tourism and Visitor Experience

Tourism plays an increasingly important role in the local economy. The success of attractions such as Downpatrick Head and the Céide Fields is built upon the quality of the surrounding landscape and visitor experience. The recently approved Céide Coast Walk has the potential to attract substantial numbers of visitors to North Mayo in the coming years. Many of these visitors will travel through Ballycastle and experience views towards the proposed development. The landscape itself forms part of the attraction. Visitors come to North Mayo because it offers scenery, tranquillity and a strong connection with nature. We are concerned that the introduction of a large-scale industrial development into this setting will diminish those qualities and reduce the appeal of the area as a tourism destination.

Effects on Residential Amenity

The proposed development will not only affect visitors.

It will also affect those of us who live here throughout the year.

The landscape is part of our daily environment.

The enjoyment of our homes is closely linked to the surrounding scenery and sense of tranquillity.

The potential for shadow flicker, visual intrusion and changing landscape character represents a genuine concern.

While some people may regard these effects as minor, they can have a significant impact when experienced every day over many years.

Summary

We are fortunate to live in one of the most scenic parts of Ireland.

The views towards Lacken Hill and the wider North Mayo landscape are among the area's greatest assets.

We believe that the proposed Tirawley Wind Farm would significantly alter the character of this landscape and would create legitimate concerns regarding shadow flicker, glare, road safety and residential amenity.

We respectfully request that these issues be carefully considered before any decision is made regarding this application.

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