

Carol Commons

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Email Address

17th June 2026

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

**Re: Objection to the Proposed Tirawley Wind Farm Strategic Infrastructure
Development Objection Submission to An Coimisiún Pleanála**

Re: Planning permission for the construction of Tirawley Windfarm consisting of 16 no. wind turbines, a permanent 110kV substation, 110kV underground cable and grid connection, and ancillary development in the townlands of Ballymurphy, Ballynaleck, Barnhill Lower & Upper, Barroe, Billoos, Carn, Carrickanass, Carrowmore, Castlелacken Demesne, and other townlands in County Mayo.

Case Number: PAX16.324258

Dear sir/madam

Kilcummin Swimmers Club wishes to make a formal submission objecting to the proposed Tirawley Wind Farm development. Our club is made up of local residents and visitors who regularly use the waters, beaches, coastline and recreational amenities of Kilcummin, Lacken and the wider North Mayo coast throughout the year.

As a swimming club, our members have a unique relationship with this landscape. We experience the area not as a passing visitor but as people who engage with it daily and throughout the seasons. The appeal of Kilcummin and Lacken lies in the quality of the natural environment, the unspoilt coastal scenery, the clean waters, the sense of tranquillity and the rich cultural heritage that surrounds us. These qualities are not only important to those who live here; they are fundamental to the growing tourism economy of North Mayo and to the increasing number of visitors who come specifically to experience the natural beauty of this coastline.

Diving around Kilcummin Pier area offers fantastic access to historical and deliberate artificial shipwrecks in Killala Bay. The crown jewel is the MV Shingle, a deliberately sunk vessel that has become Ireland's first artificial reef. Divers can also explore the historic SS Thames steamship wreck.

The Western Dive Rally takes place yearly at Kilcummin Pier attracting participants from all over the world. This event showcases the region's incredible diving, which is truly some of the best in Ireland.

The Environmental Impact Assessment Report itself acknowledges that the proposed development will be highly visible from several designated Discovery Points along the Wild Atlantic Way. Mayo County Council has highlighted the potential for negative impacts on the

unique coastal landscape and sensitive natural environment. While the applicant seeks to minimise the significance of these impacts, the reality is that the proposal would introduce an extensive industrial-scale development into a landscape that is recognised nationally and internationally for its scenic value.

The North Mayo coast is increasingly being promoted as a destination for outdoor recreation, including swimming, walking, cycling, kayaking, surfing and nature tourism. Visitors are drawn here because the landscape remains relatively untouched. The proposed development would fundamentally alter the character of this environment for decades to come. The cumulative effect of large turbines, associated infrastructure, aviation lighting, a Battery Energy Storage System, substation facilities and extensive access roads would inevitably diminish the sense of place that makes this area attractive to visitors.

The impact on tourism should not be underestimated. The local economy benefits significantly from visitors travelling along the Wild Atlantic Way and using local amenities, accommodation providers, cafés, restaurants and activity services. The proposal threatens the very landscape upon which that tourism economy depends. While some studies suggest mixed attitudes towards wind farms, it is important to recognise that this proposal is not a small-scale development. It is a large industrial project located within a highly sensitive coastal setting that forms part of the wider tourism offering of North Mayo.

We are also deeply concerned about the environmental risks associated with the development. The proposed site is located within a landscape containing sensitive peatlands, watercourses and habitats connected to internationally important protected areas, including the Lacken Saltmarsh and Kilcummin Head SAC and the Killala Bay/Moy Estuary SPA. The applicant's own Natura Impact Statement acknowledges that significant adverse effects on European sites cannot be ruled out in the absence of mitigation measures. This admission alone demonstrates the sensitivity of the receiving environment.

Our members regularly swim in the waters downstream of the proposed development. We therefore have a direct interest in the protection of local water quality. Construction activities of this scale create an inherent risk of sediment release, pollution incidents and hydrological disturbance. The proposed excavation works, road construction, turbine foundations, forestry clearance and peatland disturbance all present potential pathways for impacts on watercourses that ultimately discharge into the coastal waters used by our members and visitors alike.

Particularly concerning is the acknowledged risk of peat instability and erosion. The Environmental Impact Assessment identifies the potential for soil disturbance, peat movement and slope instability. Once such damage occurs, the environmental consequences can be long-lasting and, in some cases, irreversible. The ecological value of these peatland habitats extends beyond the development site itself and forms part of the wider environmental network that supports biodiversity throughout the region.

The proposal also raises concerns regarding its impact on the landscape and cultural heritage of North Mayo. This coastline is intrinsically linked to the wider Céide Fields landscape and contains a concentration of archaeological, historical and cultural assets that contribute significantly to the identity of the area. The introduction of turbines on this scale would alter the setting of these assets and diminish the cultural landscape that has evolved over thousands of years.

The construction phase presents additional concerns. The proposed movement of heavy goods vehicles, abnormal loads and construction traffic along local roads will place

significant pressure on infrastructure that was never designed for industrial-scale development. Many of the roads serving the area are narrow, winding and heavily used by residents, visitors, cyclists, walkers and recreational users accessing beaches and swimming locations. The inevitable increase in traffic, noise, dust and disruption will negatively affect both residents and visitors for an extended period.

We are particularly concerned about the cumulative impact of this proposal when viewed alongside other existing, approved and proposed wind energy developments across North Mayo. Communities are increasingly being asked to absorb multiple large-scale projects without any meaningful assessment of the combined effect on tourism, landscape character, recreation and quality of life. The cumulative industrialisation of the North Mayo coast threatens to undermine decades of work invested by local communities in promoting the area as a destination for nature-based tourism and outdoor recreation.

Kilcummin Swimmers Club respectfully submits that the environmental sensitivity of this location, its importance to tourism and recreation, the risks posed to protected habitats and water quality, and the cumulative transformation of the North Mayo landscape all weigh heavily against granting permission for this development.

"We wish to adopt and support the detailed submission made by the Lacken Ballycastle Community Landscape Protection Group including the report by Con Sheehan in relation to the proposed Tirawley Wind Farm development (PAX16.324258). In particular, I endorse the concerns raised regarding negative visual impact, cumulative wind farm development across North Mayo, impacts on the Céide Fields cultural landscape, effects on tourism and recreation, biodiversity impacts, inadequacies in community consultation, and the assessment of the Battery Energy Storage System. While we do not repeat those detailed arguments in full, we request that they be considered as forming part of this submission."

For these reasons, we respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse permission for the proposed Tirawley Wind Farm development.

Yours faithfully,

Carol Commons
Kilcummin Swimmers Club