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Co. Mayo

F26 X0D8

09/06/2026

An Coimisiún Pleanála

64 Marlborough Street

Dublin 1

D01 V902

Objection Submission to An Coimisiún Pleanála

Re: Planning permission for the construction of Tirawley Windfarm

Case Number: PAX16.324258

Dear Sir/ Madam

My connections to Lacken, and its environs run deep.

Summers days spent holidaying in the area in a caravan on my grandparent's land, escaping the noise and pace of town life. Walking narrow country roads to go to the local shop or heading to an uncle's house to gather more cousins for adventuring. As teenagers on those same streets at night walking in the streetlamp-less darkness as bats on the wing swoop by your head. Memories of frog strewn roads through boglands and frogspawn filled puddles and streams.

As my mother was born and raised in Lacken, we have family still living there on land that our family has worked for generations. Five generations at least that can be traced back through the times when we then lived in the Barony of Tirawley.

These lands were hard fought for to call our own, thou our toil and hardships made them profitable for others for centuries. This landscape filled with outstanding natural beauty, wildlife, families and communities that so many were forced to leave due to economic hardships.

The Gazebo in Lacken (Listed in the national inventory of architectural heritage) was built by the landed gentry where it sits on its hilltop to be seen, and from this vista three counties of Ireland are visible, Mayo, Sligo and Donegal. The whole of the Moy valley to Nephin Mountain in its splendour is on display.

On WWW.OurIrishHeritage.org, run by the National Museum of Ireland and the Heritage Council, it is described as follows "This folly (the Gazebo) has one of the best viewpoints of the surrounding areas in north Mayo. It is situated on the Hill behind Castle Lacken ruins". It is confounding therefore as to why in Constant Energy's application they believe a 135 meter Turbine approximately 300 meters from this structure would be absorbed by the landscape. With the foundations of these behemoths on hillsides affecting the drainage of the surrounding lands and landslides being known issues arising from the change in the water table. It is quite possible that such havoc could also be wrecked here. But indeed, how this historical feature it is expected to survive the vibration and destruction of the active bogland's surrounding it during construction alone is highly questionable.

Lacken graveyards both old and new lie under this hill by a river, have Constant Energy done their due diligence to ensure these changes would not adversely affect this final resting place?

Questionable too is the idea that Palmerstown bridge, an Eleven-arch road bridge over river, extant 1777, is to bear the load of over 100 modern construction trucks daily along with local regular traffic and emerge unscathed. This structure described as "A lengthy bridge widely accepted as an important component of the eighteenth-century civil engineering heritage of north County Mayo" by The National Built Heritage Service (www.buildingsofireland.ie/buildings-search/building/31301417/palmerstown-bridge-doonamona-co-mayo) is only wide enough for one lane car traffic. Its builders, though they built it intending for it to last, could never have imagined this bridge intended for foot and cart traffic of the time would be tested by such unimaginable loads.

Its architecture and location make it a significant feature on a drive on the Wild Atlantic Way in the area.

For those fortunate enough to have successfully navigated our planning laws, thou being denied permission time and again for "A Negative Visual Impact on the Amenities of the Area", (a refusal based on "when a build is out of character, overbearing, or overly dominant within its local surroundings"), and built their homes in the communities into which they were born. They now face, amongst other hardships, the devastation of the devaluation of their homes. This loss of equity, a means of stability in a time of a housing crisis in our country, is not insignificant and places many economic stresses on families when they are most in need.

In the early days of the Irish State the ESB turned to Hyrdo Electric power, did they leave the people affected by the rising waters to deal with this loss of their homes? Why now almost 100 years later are we allowing Private enterprise to so adversely affect what we hold most sacred.

Indeed, the family home is a sanctuary and offers stability for our families to grow and communities to flourish. Homes here have more importance to the Irish than our European counterparts due to our history of colonisation. Homes that now face not only the loss of their security but their sanctuary status also. Noise pollution is an ever present and real threat to our mental wellbeing.

In town or city living Noise pollution and indeed noisy neighbours are policed and restrictions are in place to facilitate this wellbeing. Indeed, it is by times for an escape from this noise that we retreat to the countryside for some peace. This sanctuary too is now under threat by the constant noise pollution from these turbine installations. Some of which are also planned for construction close to Lacken Cross school. How are our children, some of whom may have auditory sensitivities, to cope with this constant assault.

How too do we cope with the increased fire risks associated with the Battery Energy Storage System. The remote location and distance from any Emergency Fire services that even if they were closer would still be ill equipped to deal with.

Current guidelines for construction of Turbines date from 2006 and given the paces of modern technological development these guidelines now 20 years later are grossly out of date. Shadow Flicker and noise pollution are well known issues with turbines.

In an interview in the Irish journal from 2014 then Chief Operating Officer of the Irish Wind Energy Association Caitriona Diviney noted with regard to turbine setback guidelines that “previous studies show that once the separation distance is greater than 500m, the number of available sites drops significantly.”

A 2025 Wind Energy Guidelines bill currently before the Dáil states “Wind turbines that are of a height which is greater than 30 meters shall be located not less than a distance of 7.5 times the height of the turbine away from any dwelling. “ A change that is more in line with other global setback distance practices.

These turbines of Constant Energy’s proposal as at 135 Meters would, under those new guidelines, need to be over 1000 Meters from any residential property. And with respect to Ms Diviney’s then opinion, I do not believe that any person’s home or community should be thus sacrificed for the convenience of private enterprise. A new Tirawley to take away our homes.

Tourism has, thanks to Board Fáilte’s incredible initiative of the Wild Atlantic Way, helped to highlight the beauty and wild ruggedness of this area to many, not only from around Ireland but also the globe. The quiet solitude of the unspoiled Irish country side, the stunning ocean views and country walks truly make this area unlike any other. I’ve heard it said the majesty of the American Grand Canyon is but a hole in the ground by comparison! A slight exaggeration perhaps but not by much.

I was delighted and awed on social media to see Hollywood actress Michelle Pfeifer sharing photos of her family holiday in the area. The increase of tourism the Wild Atlantic Way has brought in modern times has been another welcomed income source for many families.

Indeed, this increase has been felt in my own daily life, in Ballina, where my family have proudly been running our business since 1957. Our Filling station, shop and garage has been a pit stop for many on their journeys of discovery around the area. From American tourists to a convoy of French motorists in their vintage cars and those from British soil looking to connect with their Irish heritage. We have welcomed them all, some time and again and look forward to many more adventurers to come.

I have never heard of tours to countryside industrialised with wind turbines. These are places to which one would drive through but no longer to. It is hard to image a walk on Lacken strand, Kilcummin Head or indeed the views from the Gazebo would be of interest to anyone when noise and shadow flicker is ever present. As these proposed turbines would be visible from as many places as can currently be seen from the Lacken Gazebo it is hard to imagine that this would not have a detrimental impact on the tourism viability of the entirety of the Moy Valley, and adversely affect all those who currently have job security due to tourism.

In May 2026 Minister Alan Dillon and Fáilte Ireland Launched a new 5-year tourism development plan for North Mayo projects which will include:

- the Céide Coastal Path, linking the Céide Fields with Downpatrick Head
- Continued progress on the Western Way and a connected North Mayo trails network to support walking and outdoor activity
- Celebration of the Erris Gaeltacht and strengthened visitor hubs in Ballina and Killala

An approval of this proposed Wind farm application would be detrimental to the success of this endeavour.

This coastline, so linked with our national heritage from the discoveries under the bogs of Céide, which also extend across the bogs and fields of Lacken and its environs. This history and archaeology we proudly celebrated in 1993 as Mayo 5000, A “yearlong cultural celebration inspired by the surviving human imprint in earth and stone on the Mayo landscape.”

These discoveries which have changed the understanding of our farming ancestry should be protected and celebrated. Not offered up for violation and destruction by foreign interests. Our heritage alone, surely, is worth more than that?

In summery I whole heartily object to the destruction of:

- 1) our boglands
- 2) wildlife habitats and biodiversity
- 3) cultural and architectural heritage
- 4) tourism industry
- 5) devaluation of property
- 6) destruction of our rural communities
- 7) industrialisation of agricultural lands
- 8) the double standards set for individuals and corporate entities
- 9) the endangerment of our children’s health and safety in their school setting

I respectfully request that the board having assessed all relevant information refuse this application in its entirety

Yours faithfully,

Catherine Clarke

