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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, Castlelacken Demesne, and other townlands in County Mayo.

Case Number: PAX16.324258

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing as a resident of the area within proximity to the proposed Tirawley Wind Farm project, submitted by Constant Energy Limited, to formally lodge my objection to this Strategic Infrastructure Development application. This development poses significant and irreversible risks to the local environment, biodiversity and local residents. In particular the proposal threatens critical habitats for protected species such as the Hen Harrier, involves substantial habitat removal including over 4 km of hedgerow, and raises serious concerns regarding visual impact, traffic disruption, and inadequate community consultation. These issues, coupled with shortcomings in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report, justify a refusal of permission for this project.

Cumulative Impact of Wind Farm Development on Farming in the Lacken and Ballinglen Area

The Ballinglen area is a traditional rural farming community where agriculture remains central to local livelihoods, the economy, and the character of the landscape. The proposed Tirawley Wind Farm, together with other existing, approved, and many more proposed wind energy developments, including Clydagh, Keerglen and Gelnora in the wider area, raises significant concerns regarding the cumulative impact on farming, land use, rural infrastructure, and community sustainability.

While renewable energy development plays an important role in addressing climate change and improving energy security, it is essential that the cumulative consequences for farming communities are fully understood and carefully considered.

Increasing Concentration of Wind Farm Development

The Lacken, Ballycastle, Ballinglen, Kilfian and North Mayo region is experiencing an increasing concentration of wind energy projects. There are over 200 wind turbines planned within a 200km radius of Tirawley Wind Farm. There are 52 planned for Glenora, Keerglen and Clydagh that we know of, with many more plans to be submitted. These proposed developments are creating a growing industrial presence within what has traditionally been an agricultural landscape.

The cumulative effect of multiple wind farms extends beyond the footprint of any single project. Farmers and rural residents must consider the combined impact of land take, construction activity, visual change, infrastructure development, and long-term operational effects across the wider area.

For many local residents, concern does not arise from one development alone but from the gradual transformation of the landscape through the accumulation of multiple projects over time.

Loss of Agricultural Land

One of the most immediate concerns for farmers is the permanent loss of productive agricultural land. Turbine foundations, access roads, substations, battery storage facilities, drainage works, and associated infrastructure all require land that would otherwise remain available for agricultural use.

While individual developments may occupy only a percentage of the surrounding landscape, the cumulative impact of several projects can result in a significant reduction in available grazing and productive farmland.

In areas where land is already scarce and agricultural holdings are relatively small, even modest losses can have serious consequences for farm viability, stocking rates, and future expansion opportunities.

The long-term removal of agricultural land from production places additional pressure on farming families already operating within increasingly challenging economic conditions.

Fragmentation of Farm Holdings

The introduction of wind farm infrastructure can fragment agricultural holdings and disrupt established farming practices.

Access roads, construction compounds, cable routes, and turbine locations may divide fields and alter traditional farm layouts. This can make livestock management more difficult, increase travel times within farms, and reduce operational efficiency.

For farms consisting of multiple small fields, fragmentation may create practical challenges that continue throughout the operational lifetime of the development.

The movement of livestock, machinery, and farm vehicles may become more complicated, increasing labour requirements and operational costs for farmers.

Construction Traffic and Rural Infrastructure

The construction phase of large-scale wind farm developments requires significant volumes of heavy traffic, including abnormal loads carrying turbine components.

For farming communities, this can create disruption through increased traffic, temporary road restrictions, road widening works, and accelerated deterioration of rural roads.

Farmers often rely on local road networks to transport livestock, machinery, feed, fertiliser, and other agricultural supplies. Increased construction traffic can affect accessibility, safety, and the efficiency of daily farm operations.

The cumulative effect of several wind farm developments occurring within the same region may place considerable strain on rural infrastructure that was not originally designed to accommodate sustained heavy industrial traffic.

Environmental Concerns for Agriculture

The Ballinglen area contains sensitive landscapes, including peatland, wet grassland, forestry, and agricultural pasture. These environments play an important role in maintaining soil quality, water retention, and ecological stability.

Large-scale construction activities have the potential to alter drainage patterns, disturb peat soils, and affect local hydrology. Any changes to water movement within the landscape may influence pasture productivity, soil conditions, and agricultural management practices.

Farmers depend upon reliable drainage systems and healthy soils to maintain productive grazing land. Disturbance to these systems could have consequences that extend beyond the construction period and affect farm sustainability in the long term.

Although mitigation measures may reduce these risks, concerns remain regarding the cumulative environmental impact of multiple developments within the same catchment and landscape.

Impact on Rural Character and Quality of Life

Farming is not solely an economic activity; it is closely connected to the cultural identity and social fabric of rural communities.

The increasing presence of industrial-scale infrastructure within the landscape may alter the character of the countryside and affect residents' sense of place. For many farming families, the visual transformation of familiar landscapes represents a significant loss that cannot be measured solely in economic terms.

The cumulative impact of turbines, substations, roads, and associated infrastructure may contribute to a perception that rural communities are carrying a disproportionate share of the burden associated with national renewable energy targets.

This can lead to frustration, division within communities, and a feeling that local concerns are secondary to broader policy objectives.

Economic Impact on Farming Families

While wind farm developments may provide certain economic benefits through investment, community funds, and rates contributions, these benefits are not always experienced equally across the community.

Farmers directly affected by land loss, operational disruption, or environmental change may incur costs that are not fully offset by broader community benefits.

Reduced agricultural productivity, increased management costs, restrictions on future land use, and uncertainty regarding long-term farm viability can all place additional financial pressure on farming families.

The cumulative effect of multiple developments may therefore contribute to concerns about the future sustainability of traditional farming in the area.

Long-Term Sustainability of Farming

A key concern among farmers is the long-term future of agriculture within the Ballinglen area.

As more land is allocated to infrastructure and renewable energy projects, opportunities for agricultural expansion, succession planning, and future generations of farmers may become increasingly limited.

The viability of farming depends not only on current productivity but also on preserving opportunities for future generations to continue farming and maintaining strong rural communities.

Where farming becomes progressively constrained by industrial development, there is a risk that younger generations may choose to leave the area, contributing to population decline and weakening the long-term resilience of rural communities.

The cumulative impact of multiple wind farm developments in the Ballinglen area raises important questions about the future of farming, land use, and rural sustainability.

While renewable energy development provides important national benefits, the concentration of large-scale infrastructure within a traditional farming landscape has the potential to create significant challenges for local farmers. These include the loss of productive land, fragmentation of farm holdings, environmental risks, increased operational costs, and changes to the character of the countryside.

The issue is not solely the impact of any single wind farm, but the combined effect of multiple developments over time. Careful consideration must therefore be given to the cumulative burden being placed on farming communities and whether sufficient measures are in place to protect the long-term viability of agriculture and rural life in the Ballinglen area.

A sustainable future requires a balance between renewable energy development and the preservation of productive farmland, thriving rural communities, and the farming families who continue to shape and maintain the landscape.

I wish to adopt and support the detailed submission made by the Lacken Ballycastle Community Landscape Protection Group in relation to the proposed Tirawley Wind Farm development (PAX16.324258). In particular, I endorse the concerns raised regarding 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 I do not repeat those detailed arguments in full, I request that they be considered as forming part of this submission.

In conclusion, I respectfully submit that the proposed Tirawley Wind Farm project is not appropriate for this location due to the significant negative impacts on residential amenity, local landscape, ecology, infrastructure, and the community. I urge An Coimisiún Pleanála to refuse permission for this development in the interests of proper planning and sustainable development.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Yours faithfully,
Cecil Jackson