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24th 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, Castlelacken Demesne, and other townlands in County Mayo.

Case Number: PAX16.324258

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing as the owner of a house located close to the proposed Tirawley Wind Farm site. My intention has been to move into this home permanently, but the scale and nature of this development now cast serious doubt over that plan. The project poses significant and irreversible risks to the environment, landscape, biodiversity, residential amenity, and the socio-economic wellbeing of those living in the area. These concerns, combined with substantial shortcomings in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), justify a refusal of permission.

Tourism and Cumulative Landscape Impact

The cumulative impact of multiple wind energy projects in this region—including the recently approved Glenora Wind Farm (22 turbines), as well as Keerglen and the potential Clydagh development—poses a serious threat to tourism in the Lacken and Ballycastle areas. The coastal route from Lacken to Ballycastle is a key section of the Wild Atlantic Way and a vital economic asset.

Local communities have worked tirelessly to promote the area, supported by the new Fáilte Ireland and Mayo County Council tourism plan. The scale of wind energy development now proposed for the north-west Mayo coastline risks undermining this progress. The Céide Fields complex, Downpatrick Head, and the wider historic landscape are central to the region's tourism offering. If An Coimisiún Pleanála does not fully consider the cumulative impact of all projects, the long-term future of these communities will be severely compromised.

Site Suitability and Visual Impact

The proposed turbines would be highly visible from designated scenic routes, including the Wild Atlantic Way. The visual intrusion on this sensitive coastal and rural landscape is unacceptable and conflicts with the Mayo County Development Plan's policies on landscape protection and visual amenity.

(Reference: Mayo County Council submission; EIAR Chapter 17 – Traffic and Transport, pp. 9–10; Planning Statement, pp. 69–71.)

Environmental and Ecological Concerns

The development site includes sensitive habitats such as blanket bogs and areas protected under the Habitats Directive. The extraction of large volumes of peat and disturbance of these habitats would have long-term negative consequences for biodiversity and peatland restoration.

(Reference: Appendix 1.6 Community Engagement Report, pp. 13–14; Planning Statement, pp. 69–71.)

Impact on Hen Harrier Habitat

The EIAR acknowledges that hen harriers—an Annex I species under the EU Birds Directive—are present within the study area and that the site provides suitable autumn and winter foraging habitat. The combination of blanket bog, scrub, wet grassland, semi-improved grassland, and hedgerow networks makes this landscape particularly important for the species.

A winter roost was recorded within the study area, yet no comprehensive winter roost survey appears to have been undertaken across the wind farm site itself. Surveys focused largely outside the development footprint, despite evidence that hen harriers utilise habitats within the proposed turbine locations.

The project will result in permanent habitat loss and fragmentation, including extensive hedgerow removal, blanket bog disturbance, forestry felling, and the construction of new access roads. Mitigation measures proposed by the applicant do not provide sufficient certainty that lost habitats can be effectively replaced, particularly in the short to medium term.

Research indicates that hen harriers may avoid otherwise suitable habitat near operational turbines, reducing available foraging area. The EIAR does not adequately assess or mitigate this displacement effect. Given the species' declining conservation status, the precautionary principle must apply.

Traffic, Roads, and Infrastructure

The construction phase will involve significant road works, abnormal load deliveries, and road widening, all of which will disrupt local traffic and pose safety risks. The EIAR does not adequately address these impacts.

As someone who intends to move into my home near the site, I am particularly concerned about the level of disruption this will cause to daily travel, access to services, and general mobility. Furthermore, the assessment of Palmerstown Bridge appears insufficient, and a more robust structural evaluation is required before any works proceed.

(Reference: EIAR Chapter 17 – Traffic and Transport, pp. 6–10; Appendix 1.6 Community Engagement Report, pp. 11–12.)

Property Value Impacts – A Critical Concern for Prospective Residents

As a homeowner who plans to move into the property, I am deeply concerned about the impact this development will have on local property values and the long-term viability of living in the area. Numerous studies and market analyses from Ireland, the UK, and other EU countries indicate that houses located close to large-scale wind turbines can experience reduced marketability and, in many cases, measurable devaluation.

Factors contributing to this include:

- visual intrusion
- turbine noise
- shadow flicker
- construction disturbance

- the perception of industrialisation of a rural landscape

Homes situated near turbines often take longer to sell and attract fewer potential buyers. This is a direct and personal concern for me, as the ability to move into my home—and the security of that investment—is central to my future plans.

The EIAR does not address these socio-economic impacts on individual homeowners, nor does it propose any mechanism for compensation should property values decline. Given the scale and height of the proposed turbines, and their visibility from residential properties, the risk of devaluation is significant and cannot be ignored.

Community and Socio-Economic Issues

While renewable energy is important, the proposal does not adequately address the needs or concerns of the local community. The socio-economic impact on sustainable family farms, local amenities, and rural livelihoods has not been sufficiently assessed. The proposed community benefit package is vague, lacks detail, and does not provide meaningful or direct benefits to affected residents.

(Reference: Appendix 1.6 Community Engagement Report, pp. 7–14.)

Cumulative Impact and Strategic Considerations

The project overlaps with areas where other developments are planned or operational, compounding environmental, visual, and infrastructural pressures. Mayo County Council has already raised concerns regarding the scale and height of modern turbines and the suitability of this site compared to earlier assessments.

(Reference: Mayo County Council submission; EIAR Chapter 17, pp. 9–10.)

Conclusion

For the reasons outlined above—including significant adverse impacts on residential amenity, landscape character, ecology, infrastructure, property values, and the socio-economic fabric of the community—I respectfully submit that the proposed Tirawley Wind Farm is not appropriate for this location.

As someone who owns a home near the proposed site and intends to move into it, the consequences of this development are not theoretical—they directly affect my future, my investment, and my ability to live in the community I chose. I urge An Coimisiún Pleanála to refuse permission in the interests of proper planning and sustainable development.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Yours faithfully,

Chris Murphy