

Maura & Sean Fox
Carrowniskey
Ballycastle
County Mayo
F26 D434
22nd 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,

We are writing as residents of the area within close 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.

Having reviewed the public information provided and engaged with the community consultation materials, we wish to raise the following concerns:

This submission provides an assessment of the proposed Tirawley Wind Farm development, focusing on its potential impacts on tourism, residential amenity, transport infrastructure, environmental protection, planning considerations, and the long-term interests of future generations. While recognising the importance of renewable energy in addressing climate change and achieving national energy targets, this submission raises concerns regarding the suitability of the proposed location and the scale of the development within a highly sensitive landscape.

Tourism

The proposed wind farm is located within a landscape of exceptional scenic, cultural, and archaeological value. The surrounding area includes nationally recognised coastal attractions and forms part of a region that depends heavily on tourism as a source of employment and economic activity.

The introduction of large-scale industrial turbines into this landscape would fundamentally alter the visual character of the area. The visual presence of turbines across prominent coastal and rural viewpoints has the potential to diminish the visitor experience and weaken the area's attractiveness as a tourism destination.

Although the project documentation suggests that tourism impacts will be limited, this assessment appears to underestimate the importance of landscape quality to the local economy. Tourism is closely linked to the area's natural beauty, heritage, and sense of place. Any significant alteration to these characteristics may have lasting consequences for local businesses and employment.

There is also concern regarding cumulative visual impacts arising from existing and potential future renewable energy developments. The gradual industrialisation of the landscape could erode the distinctive qualities that attract visitors and support the local economy.

Tourism Impact Assessment

Introduction

The Ballycastle, Céide Coast, and Downpatrick Head region is recognised as one of Ireland's most distinctive coastal landscapes. Its combination of dramatic scenery, rich archaeological heritage, cultural significance, and natural beauty has made it a major attraction for both domestic and international visitors. Tourism plays an important role in the local economy, supporting businesses, employment, and community development throughout North Mayo.

As a result, any large-scale industrial development within this landscape must be carefully assessed to ensure that the qualities attracting visitors are not diminished or permanently altered.

Importance of the Tourism Resource

The area is renowned for its spectacular coastal scenery, unspoilt landscapes, and internationally significant archaeological sites. Features such as the Céide Fields, the rugged Atlantic coastline, and Downpatrick Head contribute to a unique visitor experience that distinguishes the region from many other destinations.

The wider western region of Ireland is internationally recognised for its mountains, coastline, beaches, waterways, and protected natural environments. These assets form the foundation of a thriving tourism sector that continues to grow and provide economic benefits to local communities.

The designation of the Wild Atlantic Way has further enhanced the area's profile, drawing increasing numbers of visitors seeking authentic cultural experiences, outstanding scenery, and access to Ireland's natural heritage. Scenic viewpoints and discovery points throughout the region are central to this visitor experience and contribute significantly to the area's tourism appeal.

Potential Impact of Large-Scale Wind Farm Development

The introduction of a large-scale wind farm within this sensitive landscape raises concerns regarding its compatibility with the area's tourism offering.

The most significant issue is the visual impact of industrial-scale turbines on a landscape valued for its natural character and scenic quality. Wind turbines of substantial height would become prominent features across wide areas of the coastline and countryside, altering views that currently define the character of the region.

Unlike developments that can be screened or integrated into existing built environments, wind turbines are designed to be highly visible. Their scale and movement can draw attention away from natural landmarks and scenic vistas that visitors travel specifically to experience.

Particular concern arises regarding the visibility of turbines from key tourism routes, coastal viewpoints, heritage attractions, and sections of the Wild Atlantic Way. The presence of industrial infrastructure within panoramic coastal views may reduce the sense of remoteness, tranquillity, and natural beauty that currently characterises the area.

While design modifications may reduce visual prominence, they cannot eliminate the fundamental change that would occur within the landscape. The cumulative effect of multiple visible turbines across a broad area has the potential to significantly alter the visual identity of the region.

Landscape Protection and Sustainable Tourism

Long-standing planning and environmental policies recognise the importance of protecting scenic landscapes, cultural heritage, and coastal environments. These policies seek to ensure that development occurs in a manner that conserves the distinctive character of valued landscapes while supporting sustainable economic growth.

The Ballycastle and Céide Coast area represents a landscape where tourism and environmental conservation are closely linked. Visitors are attracted by the authenticity of the landscape, the quality of the scenery, and the opportunity to experience a relatively unspoilt environment.

Protecting these qualities is not only an environmental objective but also an economic necessity. Sustainable tourism depends upon maintaining the assets that attract visitors in the first place.

Economic Considerations

Tourism generates significant economic activity across accommodation providers, restaurants, retail businesses, transport services, visitor attractions, and local enterprises. The continued success of these sectors relies heavily on preserving the area's reputation as a destination of exceptional scenic and cultural value.

Any development perceived as diminishing the landscape quality of the region carries a potential economic risk. While renewable energy developments can provide investment and community benefits, these gains must be carefully balanced against the long-term value of tourism and the employment it supports.

The challenge is therefore not simply one of choosing between tourism and renewable energy, but of ensuring that renewable energy development is delivered in locations and at scales that do not undermine the natural and cultural assets upon which local economies depend.

The Ballycastle, Céide Coast, and Downpatrick Head area is a nationally important tourism destination distinguished by its scenic beauty, archaeological significance, cultural heritage, and coastal character. These qualities make the landscape particularly sensitive to large-scale industrial development. This area is a key part of Fáilte Ireland's plan for North Mayo; the Wild Mayo Destination and Experience Development Plan. Of which a planned 15km coastal path connecting Céide Fields with Downpatrick head, this is a major catalyst project in the Wild Mayo Destination and Experience Development plan.

While renewable energy development is an important component of Ireland's transition to a low-carbon future, it must be carefully balanced against the protection of landscapes that support tourism, local identity, and economic sustainability.

The potential visual impact of a large-scale wind farm within this setting raises legitimate concerns regarding the preservation of the area's tourism appeal. Any development proposal should therefore demonstrate that it can coexist with, rather than compromise, the unique environmental and cultural assets that make this region one of Ireland's most valued destinations.

Shadow Flicker

Shadow flicker occurs when rotating turbine blades cast moving shadows across nearby properties. The proposal identifies a substantial number of residential receptors that may experience this effect.

While technological mitigation measures are proposed to control and reduce shadow flicker, their effectiveness depends on continuous monitoring, maintenance, and enforcement throughout the lifetime of the project.

The fact that such a large number of properties fall within potential shadow flicker zones demonstrates the extent of the issue. Even where impacts remain within guideline limits, residents may experience disruption to daily activities and a reduction in quality of life.

The long-term success of mitigation measures cannot be guaranteed, particularly as equipment ages or operational conditions change. As a result, shadow flicker remains a significant concern for nearby communities.

Noise

Noise is one of the most common concerns associated with wind energy developments. Although modelling suggests that the project will comply with existing noise guidelines, predictive assessments cannot fully replicate real-world operating conditions.

Particular concern exists regarding amplitude modulation, often described as a repetitive "swishing" or "thumping" sound, which can cause annoyance even when overall noise levels remain within accepted limits.

Construction activities will also generate temporary noise impacts, particularly for residents living close to access routes and construction compounds.

While proposed mitigation measures are welcomed, there should be a commitment to independent noise monitoring throughout the operational life of the development, with clear procedures for investigating and resolving complaints from local residents.

Transport

The transportation of turbine components will require the movement of exceptionally large loads along rural road networks. This will necessitate road alterations, junction modifications, and temporary traffic management measures.

Construction traffic has the potential to disrupt local communities, businesses, schools, and agricultural activities. Rural roads that were not designed for heavy industrial traffic may experience accelerated deterioration, resulting in additional maintenance costs and inconvenience for residents.

Although traffic management plans have been prepared, the scale of the proposed operation means that disruption is inevitable during the construction phase. The long-term effects on local infrastructure should not be underestimated.

Infrastructure

The project requires significant supporting infrastructure, including electrical substations, grid connections, access roads, and battery energy storage facilities.

The addition of battery storage infrastructure introduces further considerations regarding safety, fire risk, and emergency response requirements. While modern safety standards reduce these risks, they cannot eliminate them entirely.

The overall footprint of the project extends well beyond the turbine locations themselves. The associated infrastructure contributes to landscape change, habitat disturbance, and increased pressure on local services and resources.

The cumulative impact of these elements should be considered alongside the turbines rather than assessed in isolation.

Environment and Planning

The proposal has undergone a comprehensive environmental assessment process and includes mitigation measures intended to reduce impacts on habitats, wildlife, watercourses, cultural heritage, and landscape character.

However, the assessment identifies a number of environmental sensitivities within and around the project area. The development is located within a landscape that contains important ecological habitats, archaeological resources, and protected sites of conservation significance.

While mitigation measures may reduce some impacts, they cannot entirely remove the consequences of introducing a large-scale industrial development into a sensitive rural and coastal environment.

Particular concern remains regarding visual impacts on the landscape, potential effects on biodiversity, and the cumulative impact of renewable energy development across the wider region.

The planning process must carefully balance national renewable energy objectives against the protection of local environmental assets, cultural heritage, and community wellbeing.

Future Generations

Supporters of the project correctly highlight the importance of renewable energy in addressing climate change and securing a sustainable energy future. The development has the potential to contribute to national climate targets, improve energy security, and provide economic benefits through investment and employment.

However, sustainability extends beyond carbon reduction alone. Future generations will also inherit the landscapes, habitats, cultural heritage, and community identities shaped by decisions made today.

If development proceeds without adequate consideration of local environmental and cultural values, there is a risk that future generations will lose elements of their natural and historical inheritance that cannot be replaced.

Economic benefits associated with renewable energy must therefore be balanced against the long-term protection of the area's unique character and the industries, such as tourism, that depend upon it.

True sustainability requires solutions that address climate change while preserving the environmental and cultural assets that contribute to community wellbeing and resilience.

Conclusion

The Tirawley Wind Farm proposal presents both opportunities and challenges. The development would contribute to renewable energy generation and support national climate objectives. However, significant concerns remain regarding its location, scale, and potential impacts on tourism, landscape character, residential amenity, transport infrastructure, environmental protection, and cultural heritage.

The proposal highlights the broader challenge of balancing renewable energy development with the protection of sensitive rural and coastal environments. While renewable energy infrastructure is essential, it must be delivered in a manner that respects local communities, safeguards environmental assets, and maintains the qualities that make areas such as North Mayo distinctive and valuable.

A more balanced approach, incorporating stronger environmental safeguards, enhanced community engagement, and further consideration of alternative design or siting options, would better align the project with the principles of sustainable development and long-term public interest.

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.

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

Yours faithfully,

Maura & Sean Fox