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23/06/2026

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,

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.

I was born in Lacken and maintain strong family connections to the area. Although I now reside elsewhere, Lacken remains my homeland and I return regularly to visit family, friends and places that have formed an important part of my life for generations.

The landscape of Lacken is not simply a scenic backdrop. It is a place of deep personal, cultural and emotional significance. The area's unique coastal setting, open countryside, natural beauty, tranquillity and strong sense of community are qualities that have shaped my connection with this place throughout my life.

As a regular visitor, I greatly value the opportunity to experience the peace, unspoilt views and distinctive character of the area. The proposed development would fundamentally alter this experience through the introduction of 16 industrial-scale turbines of 135 metres in height on an elevated site together with associated infrastructure..

I am particularly concerned about the visual impact of the proposed development. The turbines would become dominant features within the landscape and would permanently alter views that have remained largely unchanged for generations. The visual presence of turbines on elevated ground would industrialise a landscape currently valued for its natural beauty, heritage and scenic character.

The landscape surrounding Lacken forms an important part of the area's cultural identity and sense of place. It contributes to local heritage, community pride and the attractiveness of the area for visitors and returning members of the diaspora. Once altered, these landscape qualities cannot be restored.

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

1. Residential and Property Impact

The proposed wind turbines are located uncomfortably close to existing homes. Despite the stated 540m buffer, the visual impact, noise pollution, and potential shadow flicker effects will significantly disrupt our residential amenity and quality of life. There is also a genuine concern about the likely devaluation of property prices due to proximity to large-scale industrial turbines.

(Reference: Appendix 1.6 Community Engagement Report, Pages 7-13)

2. Site Suitability and Landscape Impact

The location has been described as scattered and not suitable for a development of this scale. The area includes sensitive landscapes, visible from the Wild Atlantic Way and other designated scenic routes, which would be adversely affected by this wind farm. The visual intrusion on the unique coastal and rural landscape is unacceptable and contrary to the policies outlined in the Mayo County Development Plan regarding landscape protection and visual amenities.

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

3. Environmental and Ecological Concerns

The site includes sensitive habitats such as blanket bogs and areas with ecological significance under the Habitats Directive. The large volumes of peat to be extracted

and the disturbance to these habitats could have long-term detrimental effects on biodiversity and peatland restoration efforts.

(Reference: Appendix 1.6 Community Engagement Report, Pages 13-14; Planning Statement, Pages 69-71)

4. Impact on Hen Harrier Habitat

I am particularly concerned about the impact of the proposed development on the hen harrier, an Annex I protected species under the EU Birds Directive and one whose Irish population has declined significantly in recent years. The EIAR acknowledges that hen harriers are present within the study area and that the site provides suitable autumn and winter foraging habitat. The site contains a combination of blanket bog, scrub, wet grassland, semi-improved grassland and hedgerow networks, all of which are important habitats for foraging and roosting hen harriers.

Of particular concern is that a winter hen harrier roost was recorded within the study area, yet no comprehensive winter roost survey appears to have been undertaken across the wind farm site itself. The applicant's roost surveys focused primarily on areas outside the development footprint, despite evidence that hen harriers utilise habitats within the proposed development area. In the absence of a robust assessment of winter roosting activity, it is difficult to conclude that the impacts on this protected species have been fully assessed.

The development will result in the permanent loss and fragmentation of habitats used by hen harriers, including substantial hedgerow removal, loss of blanket bog habitat, forestry felling and the construction of extensive site roads and infrastructure. While mitigation is proposed, there remains uncertainty as to whether replacement habitats can adequately replicate the ecological value of the habitats being lost, particularly in the short to medium term.

I am also concerned about the cumulative effects of habitat loss, construction disturbance and operational displacement. Research has shown that hen harriers may avoid otherwise suitable habitat in the vicinity of operational turbines, resulting in a reduction in available foraging area. The application does not appear to adequately assess or mitigate this displacement effect.

Given the conservation status of the species, the acknowledged presence of suitable habitat and recorded winter roosting activity within the study area, I do not believe sufficient scientific certainty has been provided to demonstrate that the proposed development will not adversely affect the hen harrier population using this landscape. The precautionary principle should therefore apply.

5. Traffic and Infrastructure Impact

The construction phase will bring significant disruption to the local road network due to the delivery of abnormal loads and turbine components. The existing roads will require widening and modifications that will impact local traffic flow and road safety. The scale of this impact has not been adequately mitigated in the proposal.

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

6. Community and Socio-Economic Issues

While I acknowledge the need for renewable energy and some regional economic benefits, the socio-economic impact on sustainable family farms and local amenities is concerning. The proposal does not sufficiently address the community's needs or provide clear, direct benefits to local residents. The proposed community benefit package remains vague and unconvincing.

(Reference: Appendix 1.6 Community Engagement Report, Pages 7-14)

7. Cumulative Impact and Strategic Considerations

The project overlaps with areas where other developments are planned or existing, increasing cumulative environmental, visual, and infrastructural pressures. The scale and height of modern turbines, as noted by Mayo County Council, raise questions about the suitability of this site compared to previous assessments.

(Reference: Mayo County Council submission, EIAR Chapter 17, Pages 9-10)

8. Health, Wellbeing and Residential Amenity

Residents currently enjoy a peaceful environment characterised by low background noise levels and open coastal views. Concerns remain regarding turbine noise, low-frequency noise, shadow flicker and the cumulative psychological effects associated with living near large industrial structures. The World Health Organisation recognises that environmental noise can adversely affect health and quality of life. I am particularly concerned about the potential long-term effects on health, wellbeing, peace, tranquillity and enjoyment of the area.

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,
Maureen Ursich