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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 to formally object to the proposed Tirawley Wind Farm development. I do not believe this development is appropriate for this location. The project would have significant impacts on the landscape, local communities, tourism, biodiversity, traffic infrastructure, and the future sustainable development of North Mayo. Having reviewed the application documentation, I wish to raise the following concerns.

Tourism and Cumulative Impact

I am deeply concerned about the cumulative impact that this development, together with other existing and proposed wind energy projects including Glenora, Keerglen and Clydaggh, will have on the tourism potential of the Lacken and Ballycastle areas. The coastline from Lacken to Ballycastle forms part of the Wild Atlantic Way and is one of the most scenic and historically important landscapes in Ireland. The area benefits from attractions such as the Céide Fields, Downpatrick Head and its unique coastal scenery, all of which contribute significantly to the local economy.

Local communities, businesses, Mayo County Council and Fáilte Ireland have invested considerable effort in developing tourism opportunities in North Mayo. The concentration of multiple large-scale wind farms across this landscape risks undermining these efforts and eroding

the area's attractiveness as a tourism destination. I do not believe the cumulative visual and tourism impacts of all proposed developments have been fully assessed.

Environmental and Ecological Concerns

The development would involve significant disturbance of sensitive habitats, including blanket bog and other ecologically important areas. There are concerns regarding peat excavation, habitat fragmentation and the removal of extensive lengths of hedgerows, all of which contribute to biodiversity and ecosystem functioning within the area.

Impact on Hen Harrier Habitat

I am particularly concerned about the potential impact on the Hen Harrier, a protected species under the EU Birds Directive. The application acknowledges the presence of suitable foraging habitat within the study area and records winter roosting activity. However, there appears to be uncertainty regarding the extent to which the species utilises lands within the proposed development footprint.

The permanent loss of habitat, removal of hedgerows, disturbance during construction and potential displacement effects associated with operational turbines raise serious concerns regarding the long-term conservation of this species within the area. In my opinion, sufficient scientific certainty has not been provided to demonstrate that the development will not adversely affect Hen Harriers and their habitat. The precautionary principle should therefore apply.

Traffic, Infrastructure and Access to Essential Healthcare

The traffic impacts associated with this development are of particular concern. The construction process will involve significant road widening, junction modifications and the movement of abnormal loads along the local road network. These works will inevitably lead to delays, road closures and disruption for local residents.

Many people living in North Mayo must already travel significant distances to access healthcare services. It is increasingly common for residents to travel to Galway for hospital appointments, specialist consultations and medical treatment. The prospect of additional delays caused by turbine deliveries, road works and construction traffic is deeply concerning, particularly for elderly residents, patients undergoing treatment and those attending time-sensitive hospital or doctor appointments.

In rural areas, reliable and safe access to healthcare is essential. I do not believe the application has adequately considered the cumulative effect that prolonged construction activity may have on local communities attempting to access hospitals, medical centres and other essential services. It is unreasonable that residents should face further hardship and travel delays resulting from a development that is proposed in what I believe is an inappropriate location.

I am also concerned that insufficient assessment has been undertaken regarding the suitability of Palmerstown Bridge and other elements of the local road network to accommodate the proposed abnormal load movements associated with the development.

Community and Future Development of Rural Areas

A further concern relates to the long-term future of local communities. Across North Mayo, many younger people and families wish to return home, settle in the area and build homes within their local communities. However, many of these families face significant difficulties obtaining planning permission for individual rural houses despite strong family and community connections to the area.

It is difficult to understand how local families can face substantial planning restrictions when seeking to build modest homes, yet a proposal of this scale is considered acceptable within the same landscape. The contrast is particularly striking given the industrial nature of the proposed development and its potential to transform the character of a unique rural environment.

The future sustainability of rural communities depends upon supporting people who wish to live, work and raise families locally. Developments of this scale risk changing the character of the area in a manner that may discourage future residential development and undermine efforts to sustain vibrant rural communities.

Conclusion

For the reasons outlined above, I respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse permission for the proposed Tirawley Wind Farm development. The proposal would result in significant adverse impacts on the landscape, biodiversity, tourism, local infrastructure and the quality of life of us as residents. Furthermore, the cumulative effect of multiple wind farm developments across North Mayo has not, in my view, been adequately addressed.

North Mayo is a unique landscape of exceptional natural beauty, cultural importance and community value. It should not be subject to inappropriate industrial-scale development that risks compromising its character and future potential for generations to come.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Yours faithfully,

Noel and Mary Tighe, Rathoonagh, Ballycastle.