

PLANNING OBJECTION TO THE PROPOSED TIRAWLEY WINDFARM DEVELOPMENT

Submission to An Coimisiún Pleanála. Case Ref: PAX16.324258

Submitted by: Noel Flannelly, Castletown House, Carrowmore, Lacken, Ballina, Co. Mayo, F26 P6R3

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Executive Summary

I respectfully object to the proposed Tirawley Windfarm development. This submission is made on the basis of significant concerns that I have regarding residential amenity, landscape impact, equine welfare, rider safety, tourism, community wellbeing and the long-term viability of an established 5-star sport horse breeding and training enterprise located approximately 738 metres from a proposed turbine.

Personal Connection to Lacken

I was born and raised in Lacken and have lived here all my life. The area's landscape, coastal character, tranquillity and strong community identity are fundamental to my quality of life and to the operation of my equine enterprise. The proposed development would permanently alter the environment in which I live and work.

Residential Amenity

The proposed turbines would become dominant visual features within the landscape surrounding my home. I will be exposed to visual intrusion, shadow flicker, operational noise, aviation lighting and loss of tranquillity. The cumulative effect of these impacts would significantly diminish my residential amenity.

5-Star Sport Horse Enterprise

I operate a specialist breeding and training enterprise comprising of breeding mares, foals, yearlings, two-year-olds, three-year-olds and young horses progressing through development. The objective of the programme is to produce horses capable of competing at

5-star international level. Significant investment has been made in bloodlines, training, facilities and welfare standards.

Long-Term Breeding Programme and Impact on Broodmares and Foals

My equine enterprise is centred on the breeding and production of elite sport horses capable of competing at international 5-star level. Producing a horse of this calibre typically requires a minimum of six years from conception before its full sporting potential can be assessed.

The breeding cycle begins with the careful selection and insemination of broodmares, followed by an approximately eleven-month gestation period. The resulting foal progresses through critical developmental stages as a foal, yearling, two-year-old, three-year-old and young horse before commencing advanced training. Significant financial investment is made in breeding, veterinary care, nutrition, welfare and training throughout this period.

In addition to the lands surrounding my home, I rent agricultural lands located approximately 515 metres from proposed Turbine AT15. These lands are used specifically for broodmares, foals and young stock during important stages of their development.

I am concerned that the proximity of large-scale wind turbines to these grazing and breeding lands may adversely affect broodmares, unborn foals and young horses. The EIAR does not contain any assessment of potential impacts on equine breeding operations of this nature.

Given the significant investment involved and the lengthy timeframe required to produce elite sport horses, even relatively minor adverse impacts on breeding stock could have long-term consequences for the viability of the enterprise.

Equine Welfare

Horses are highly sensitive prey animals. Continuous turbine movement, construction disturbance, shadow flicker and operational noise may adversely affect behaviour, confidence and training. The EIAR contains no specific assessment of the impacts on equine breeding and training enterprises.

Arena Visibility and Rider Safety

The proposed turbines would be visible from the riding arena. Children and adults regularly use the facility. Any increase in horse reactivity will create heightened risks for riders, instructors and handlers, particularly during the training of young horses.

Landscape and Visual Impact

Lacken is recognised for its exceptional coastal landscape and scenic value. The introduction of turbines 135 metres in height on an elevated site would fundamentally alter the visual character of the area. The resulting industrialisation of the landscape would be permanent and irreversible.

Wild Atlantic Way and Tourism

The area benefits from tourism associated with the Wild Atlantic Way and its scenic landscapes. Visitors are attracted by tranquillity, heritage and natural beauty. The proposal risks undermining these assets and may negatively affect local tourism activity.

Community Identity and Social Impact

The landscape forms part of the identity of the Lacken community. The proposed development would diminish the qualities that I value most and alter the area's sense of place for future generations.

Public Participation and Information Concerns

Meaningful public participation is a cornerstone of environmental decision-making. I was not adequately informed, consulted or made aware of the proposed Tirawley Windfarm development. Such matters should be carefully considered by the board

Planning Policy Context

The proposal should be assessed having regard to the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the National Planning Framework, the Mayo County Development Plan, Wind Energy Development Guidelines, the European Landscape Convention and principles of sustainable development. Renewable energy objectives must be balanced against residential amenity, landscape protection and rural enterprise sustainability.

Precautionary Principle

Where uncertainty remains regarding impacts on human wellbeing, equine welfare, rider safety and landscape character, the precautionary principle should apply. The burden rests on the applicant to demonstrate that significant adverse effects will not occur.

Conclusion

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.

The proposed Tirawley windfarm places both my family home (738m from a turbine) and key breeding lands used for broodmares and foals (approximately 515m from Turbine AT15) within the zone of influence of this industrial-scale development, creating significant and unacceptable risks to residential amenity, equine welfare and the long-term viability of my established breeding programme and rural enterprise. It would permanently industrialise a unique coastal landscape.

For these reasons I respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse planning permission.

Yours faithfully

Noel Flannelly