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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 wish to make a formal objection to the proposed Tirawley Wind Farm development. I am the proprietor of Bessie's Bar in Lacken and have operated a business that depends heavily on visitors to this area. My objection is based on the significant negative impact this development will have on tourism, the local economy, the character of our landscape, our road infrastructure, and the social fabric of our community.

As a business owner, I am deeply concerned that this project is being presented as a benefit to the area when, in reality, it threatens the very assets upon which many local businesses depend. The economy of North Mayo is not built on heavy industry. It is built on tourism, heritage, scenery, outdoor recreation, community spirit, and the unique identity of this coastline. The proposed development risks undermining all of these.

Impact on Tourism and Local Businesses

The applicant concludes that there will be no significant adverse effects on tourism. As someone whose livelihood depends directly on visitors to the area, I fundamentally disagree with this conclusion.

Visitors come to Lacken and North Mayo because of the unspoilt landscape, the dramatic coastline, the Wild Atlantic Way, the Céide Coast experience, the Western Way, Humbert's Trail, and the internationally recognised heritage of the Céide Fields region. These attractions are not isolated locations; they are part of a wider landscape experience. Tourists do not simply visit a single viewpoint and leave. They travel through the landscape, stay in local accommodation, visit local pubs and restaurants, walk our trails, and experience the area's unique sense of place.

The EIAR itself acknowledges that coastal landscapes are particularly sensitive to wind farm development. It also records concerns raised by Mayo County Council regarding the suitability of this landscape for industrial-scale wind energy development. These concerns should not be dismissed lightly.

The proposed turbines, each standing 135 metres high, together with the extensive road network, substation, battery energy storage facility, and associated infrastructure, will industrialise a landscape that is currently marketed and valued for its natural beauty. Visitors who come to experience the Wild Atlantic Way do not travel here to look at an industrial energy complex.

The applicant relies heavily on tourism surveys carried out in other locations and over broad geographical areas. Such surveys cannot accurately predict the effect on a tourism destination as unique and sensitive as the North Mayo coast. The cumulative impact of existing, approved, proposed, and future wind farm developments throughout North Mayo has also not been adequately considered from a tourism perspective.

For businesses such as mine, even a relatively small reduction in visitor numbers can have serious consequences. The economic reality for rural businesses is that margins are often tight and survival depends on maintaining visitor numbers. Any decline in the attractiveness of the area as a tourism destination will directly affect businesses, employment, and the wider local economy.

Damage to Road Infrastructure and Visitor Experience

The applicant suggests that road improvements associated with the development will result in positive effects. This fails to recognise the significant disruption that will occur during construction and the lasting impact on the character of local roads.

The roads around Lacken and Ballycastle are not simply transport corridors. They form part of the visitor experience. Tourists travelling the Wild Atlantic Way and exploring the North Mayo coast value the rural character of these roads and the landscape through which they pass.

The development will require abnormal loads, heavy construction traffic, extensive road modifications, widening works, and the movement of turbine components through rural communities. These works will inevitably create disruption, inconvenience, and potential safety concerns.

The applicant's assessment assumes that mitigation measures will successfully prevent significant impacts. However, anyone familiar with rural roads in this area understands how vulnerable they are to damage from heavy traffic, particularly during periods of poor weather. Once damage occurs, local communities are often left dealing with the consequences long after construction crews have departed.

The suggestion that road widening and alterations represent a net benefit fails to recognise the loss of rural character that attracts visitors in the first place. Roads engineered to accommodate oversized turbine deliveries are fundamentally different from the roads that currently contribute to the area's appeal.

Destruction of Landscape Character

The applicant's own documentation acknowledges that wind farms are developments with a high impact potential due to their scale, bulk, movement, and visibility.

The North Mayo coast is one of Ireland's most distinctive landscapes. It is a landscape defined by expansive coastal views, open horizons, archaeological heritage, traditional farming patterns, and a strong sense of place. These qualities cannot simply be recreated elsewhere.

While the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment attempts to minimise the significance of the effects, it remains clear that the development will fundamentally alter the character of the area for decades. The proposed turbines will become dominant features across large areas of the landscape and will be visible from numerous locations used by residents and visitors alike.

The EIAR acknowledges moderate negative visual impacts within and around the site. It also recognises indirect negative impacts on cultural heritage settings and landscape features. These are not minor matters. The setting of heritage assets and the wider landscape context are integral parts of what makes this area special.

The applicant places considerable emphasis on the reversibility of effects after decommissioning. This argument is difficult to accept when the operational life of the project extends for 35 years. For an entire generation, the landscape will be transformed. For many local residents and businesses, this is effectively a permanent change.

Community Division and Social Impact

One of the most disappointing aspects of this proposal has been the division it has created within the community.

This development is not supported by a large proportion of the people who live in the area. Numerous local community groups have made submissions objecting to the project and have highlighted serious concerns regarding its impact on tourism, heritage, landscape, biodiversity, health, and quality of life.

Rather than bringing benefits, the project has created uncertainty, conflict, and tension within a small rural community. The social cost of such developments is often overlooked in environmental assessments, yet it is very real for those who live here.

The people of Lacken have spent years working together to develop tourism initiatives, improve amenities, promote heritage, and create opportunities for future generations. The proposed wind farm threatens to undermine these efforts by replacing a tourism-based vision for the area with large-scale industrial infrastructure.

Conclusion

As the proprietor of Bessie's Bar, I am extremely concerned about the long-term consequences of this development for my business, my community, and the future of tourism in North Mayo.

The applicant has failed to demonstrate that the development can coexist with the area's tourism economy without causing significant harm. The proposal places at risk the very qualities that attract visitors to the region and sustain local businesses. It will alter the landscape, damage the visitor experience, place additional pressures on rural infrastructure, and further divide the community.

The North Mayo coast is a unique national asset. Once industrialised on this scale, its character cannot be restored simply by removing turbines decades into the future.

I wish to adopt and support the detailed submission made by the Lacken Ballycastle Community Landscape Protection Group including the report by Con Sheehan in relation to the proposed Tirawley Wind Farm development (PAX16.324258). In particular, I endorse the concerns raised regarding negative visual impact, 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,

Nollaig Collins

Proprietor, Bessie's Bar

Lacken

Co. Mayo