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22nd June 2026

The Secretary
An Coimisiún Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
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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 have lived in Lissadrone all my life and am at present finishing my apprenticeship and plan to move back home to get work locally. In time I would like to build a house on family land but this will not be possible if the proposed Wind Farm goes ahead. I am the fourth generation of my family to live in Lissadrone and love the sea and way of life.

I would like 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, I wish to raise the following concerns:

Impact of the Proposed Tirawley Wind Farm on Rural Housing and Future Generations

The proposed Tirawley Wind Farm represents a significant infrastructure development within a predominantly rural area. While the project is intended to contribute to renewable energy generation and national climate objectives, it also raises important questions regarding the future of rural communities, housing opportunities, and the ability of younger generations to remain in or return to their home areas.

I wish to outline the potential implications of the development for young people like myself seeking to build homes, establish families, and maintain long-term connections with their local communities.

Rural Housing and Planning Restrictions

The proposed wind farm consists of large-scale turbines and associated infrastructure distributed across a substantial area of rural land. The development includes turbines, access roads, substations, battery storage facilities, construction compounds, and operational infrastructure.

As with all wind energy developments, separation distances between turbines and residential properties are required to protect residential amenity and operational safety. These separation distances create extensive zones within which new residential development may become difficult or impossible to achieve.

For individuals seeking planning permission to build homes in the vicinity of the development, the presence of turbines may introduce additional planning constraints relating to noise, shadow flicker, visual impact, and safety considerations. Even where land remains available, the likelihood of obtaining planning permission may be reduced due to the proximity of wind farm infrastructure.

The practical effect is that significant areas of rural land may become unavailable for future housing development, limiting options for local people who wish to build homes within their own communities.

Impact on Young People Returning Home

Many young people leave rural areas to pursue education, apprenticeships, training, or employment opportunities. A common aspiration is to return home, build a house on family land, and establish a future within the community where they were raised.

The proposed development has the potential to make this increasingly difficult. Individuals who might otherwise qualify for rural housing may find that suitable sites are no longer available due to planning restrictions associated with the wind farm.

For a young person completing an apprenticeship or beginning a career, the inability to secure planning permission can have significant consequences. It may delay home ownership, increase financial pressure, or force relocation to other towns or cities where housing opportunities are available.

Over time, these barriers can contribute to population decline, ageing demographics, and the gradual weakening of rural communities.

Social and Community Consequences

Housing is not simply a planning issue; it is central to community sustainability. The ability of younger generations to remain in or return to rural areas is essential for maintaining schools, sports clubs, community organisations, local businesses, and family networks.

Where opportunities for housing become restricted, communities may experience reduced population growth and a loss of younger residents. This can affect the social fabric of an area and undermine efforts to sustain vibrant rural communities.

Many families expect that future generations will be able to build on family land and remain close to relatives and support networks. If those opportunities are diminished, the long-term character and continuity of the community may be affected.

The cumulative effect of planning restrictions associated with large-scale infrastructure can therefore extend far beyond individual housing applications and influence the future viability of entire communities.

Landscape and Land Use Change

The development would introduce substantial changes to the existing rural landscape. In addition to turbines, associated infrastructure such as access roads, electrical installations, forestry clearance, and construction compounds would alter the character of the area.

These changes may affect perceptions of the countryside as a desirable place to live and build a family home. While some residents may view renewable energy infrastructure positively, others may consider the industrialisation of rural landscapes as a deterrent to future residential development.

The long-term presence of large-scale infrastructure may therefore influence both planning decisions and individual choices regarding where people choose to live.

Balancing Climate Goals and Community Needs

Renewable energy projects play an important role in addressing climate change, improving energy security, and supporting national sustainability objectives. These benefits are significant and should be recognised.

However, climate policy must also be balanced with the social and economic needs of rural communities. Sustainable development requires consideration not only of environmental objectives but also of housing, population retention, community wellbeing, and intergenerational fairness.

The challenge is to ensure that renewable energy developments are planned and designed in a manner that allows local communities to continue growing and evolving rather than placing additional barriers before future generations.

The proposed Tirawley Wind Farm highlights a growing tension between the need for renewable energy infrastructure and the desire of rural communities to retain and attract younger generations.

For young people seeking to return home, build a house, and establish a future within their local area, the development may create significant planning and housing challenges. The combination of turbine separation distances, operational constraints, and landscape change has the potential to reduce opportunities for residential development within affected areas.

While the project may contribute positively to national climate objectives, its local consequences should not be overlooked. The long-term sustainability of rural communities depends not only on renewable energy generation but also on ensuring that future generations have the opportunity to live, work, and raise families within the places they call home.

A balanced approach is required—one that recognises both the importance of climate action and the fundamental need to preserve opportunities for rural housing, community continuity, and the future of younger generations.

Risk of Rural Depopulation

One of the most significant concerns associated with the proposed development is its potential contribution to the gradual depopulation of the local rural community.

Rural communities depend upon a steady flow of younger generations remaining in, or returning to, their home areas. The ability to build a home, establish a family, and develop a career locally is fundamental to maintaining population levels and ensuring the long-term sustainability of rural life.

Where opportunities for new housing become restricted, young people are often forced to seek accommodation elsewhere. This can result in the permanent loss of skilled workers,

tradespeople, farmers, and young families who would otherwise contribute to the social and economic life of the area.

For many young adults, particularly those completing apprenticeships, trades, or higher education, returning home to build on family land is an important pathway to home ownership. If planning restrictions associated with large-scale infrastructure effectively remove this possibility, the result may be increased outward migration and a continuing decline in population.

The consequences of depopulation extend far beyond individual families. Schools may experience declining enrolment, local businesses may lose customers, sports clubs and community organisations may struggle to attract members, and essential rural services may become increasingly difficult to sustain.

An ageing population without sufficient younger families to replace it can lead to a gradual erosion of community vitality. The loss of population also weakens social networks, reduces economic activity, and threatens the long-term viability of rural settlements.

While renewable energy developments may provide national benefits, these must be carefully weighed against their potential impact on local communities. Sustainable development should support both environmental objectives and the continued ability of rural communities to grow, renew themselves, and provide opportunities for future generations.

The future of the area depends not only on producing renewable energy but also on ensuring that young people can continue to live, work, build homes, and raise families within the communities where they have strong family, cultural, and social connections.

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,
Tadhg Jackson