

Bridget O'Brien

Knockliscrane

Miltown Malbay

Co Clare

19/06/2026

To: An Coimisiún Pleanála

Re: Formal Observation and Objection to Proposed Slieveacurry Strategic Infrastructure Development

Case Reference: PAX03.324270

Applicant: Slieveacurry Limited

I wish to submit this formal observation and objection regarding the proposed Slieveacurry Strategic Infrastructure Development consisting of 9 wind turbines with proposed overall blade tip heights of 175 metres in County Clare.

I respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse permission for this development for the following reasons.

Planning History and Previous Refusals

This proposed development must be considered in the context of the extensive planning history associated with the site and surrounding area.

The site has previously been the subject of multiple planning applications, including:

the withdrawal of previous applications, Planning Ref. P20806 – withdrawn by the developer

the previous refusals by Clare County Council under Planning References P21370 and P211226,

the refusal by An Bord Pleanála under Appeal Ref. PL03.312728,

The repeated refusals by both Clare County Council and An Bord Pleanála clearly demonstrate longstanding and unresolved concerns regarding the suitability of this location for a wind energy development of this scale and nature.

The redesignation of the proposal as a Strategic Infrastructure Development does not remove or diminish the significant planning, environmental, visual and residential amenity concerns previously identified.

It is particularly significant that the turbines proposed under the current application are 9 turbines now as opposed to 8 previously **Refused** in this same site

The current proposal seeks turbines a height of 175m.

Given that previous applications involving a smaller number of turbines were considered unacceptable by both Clare County Council and An Bord Pleanála, it is difficult to understand how more wind turbines in this application and more visually dominant proposal could now be considered acceptable.

This proposed wind turbine farm would:

- dramatically expand the visual zone of influence,
- intensify visual intrusion throughout the wider area,
- increase overbearing effects on nearby residential properties,
- and further industrialise the rural landscape of west Clare.

Excessive Scale, Visual Impact and Landscape Damage

The proposed turbines are of an excessive and unprecedented scale for this rural area and would introduce a dominant industrial feature into an open and scenic landscape.

Turbines approaching 175 metres in height would be visible across a very extensive area from Kerry to Galway and would fundamentally alter the character of the Co Clare countryside.

The cumulative visual impact of 9 turbines of this magnitude would result in serious injury to the visual amenities of the area and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the region.

The development would:

- seriously detract from scenic views,
- damage the character of the rural landscape,
- create visual clutter and skyline intrusion,
- and undermine the environmental and tourism value of west Clare.

Cumulative Impact and Proliferation of Wind Energy Development

Previous refusals associated with this site raised concerns regarding cumulative impacts and the proliferation of wind energy developments within the area.

The cumulative impact of existing, permitted and proposed wind farms in County Clare has already placed substantial pressure on the receiving landscape.

Approval of this proposal would contribute to the continued industrialisation of the countryside and establish an undesirable precedent for further oversized turbine developments in rural areas.

Residential Amenity and Property Impacts

The proposed development would seriously injure residential amenity by reason of:

- excessive visual dominance,
- turbine movement,
- shadow flicker,
- noise and low frequency sound,
- aviation and turbine lighting,
- loss of internet communications as working from home is very important for many households.
- and the loss of rural tranquillity and character.

The scale and proximity of turbines approaching 175 metres in height would have a major negative impact on the enjoyment, attractiveness and peaceful living conditions of nearby homes.

The proposed development would also negatively affect the desirability and marketability of nearby residential properties due to the overwhelming industrial presence introduced into what is currently a rural residential environment.

Residents who have invested in homes and property in this area should not be subjected to an industrial-scale development of this magnitude.

Environmental, Ecological and Hydrological Concerns

Serious concerns remain regarding the environmental impacts associated with the proposed development, including:

- impacts on wildlife and bird species,
- habitat disturbance,
- peatland and soil stability,
- hydrology and water quality,
- sediment release into local watercourses,
- and long-term environmental damage during construction and operation.

Previous refusals and appeal decisions associated with this site have already identified concerns regarding environmental and ecological impacts.

Where uncertainty exists regarding environmental consequences, the precautionary principle should apply.

Road Infrastructure and Construction Impacts

The local and regional road network is unsuitable for the transportation and construction requirements associated with turbines of this unprecedented scale.

The delivery of turbine components and associated construction works would likely result in:

- road damage,

- traffic disruption,

- public safety concerns,

- disturbance to local residents,

- and significant disruption to the wider community over an extended period.

Tourism and Rural Economy

West Clare is widely recognised for its scenic beauty, rural character, tourism value and environmental heritage.

The introduction of turbines of up to 175 metres in height risks causing long-term damage to the visual attractiveness and identity of the area and may negatively impact tourism,

In the unlikely event that planning is granted, and because of the location on the wild Atlantic way of this unspoiled scenic landscape, we formally request that all landowners, access road owners and entrances owners, who enter into agreements to host wind turbines on their lands be required to provide and maintain a legally binding reinstatement bond to guarantee the full restoration of the land at the end of the project's operational life.

The landowners have willingly invited the wind energy developer onto their lands for private financial gain through lease payments, annual rents, and long-term commercial benefit. As they are directly profiting from the placement of industrial wind infrastructure on agricultural land, they must also accept full responsibility for ensuring that the land is fully restored and properly reinstated once the turbines reach the end of their operational life. It is not reasonable that neighbouring communities, future generations, local authorities, or taxpayers should carry the risk and cost of decommissioning industrial infrastructure placed on private land for private financial benefit.

The principle must be simple: those who profit from the development must also carry responsibility for its full lifecycle, including final removal and land reinstatement.

My concern is that developers may change ownership several times over the lifetime of the project, may operate through limited companies, or may cease trading entirely before

decommissioning becomes due. In such cases, responsibility can become unclear, and the financial burden may fall on the wider community, or the State.

For this reason, the bond must not rely solely on the developer's financial position. Most formal planning conditions usually seek security from the developer alone, but this is not enough, as developers can disappear, and projects are often sold multiple times, making liability increasingly difficult to enforce decades later. As these projects extend across decades and often beyond one generation, the obligation must remain permanently attached to the land.

The landowner, as the permanent beneficiary of the lease arrangement and the long-term holder of the land, must also be bound by enforceable financial security that remains attached to the land itself. A landowner who accepts private financial benefit from hosting industrial wind infrastructure must also accept legally secured responsibility for full land reinstatement. Profit cannot be separated from restoration liability.

Landowners should therefore be required to have their own legally binding reinstatement bond in place ensuring the full removal of turbines, towers, substations, cables, concrete foundations, crane hardstands, access roads, and all associated infrastructure. This should also include the restoration of drainage systems, hedgerows, field boundaries, any polluted Lakes, and the full return of the land to its original agricultural condition suitable for farming or recreational use.

I further request that the landowner's assets cannot be reduced, transferred, or otherwise placed below the required bond threshold for the full duration of the project. The financial security must remain sufficient at all times to guarantee full restoration, regardless of ownership changes, inheritance, sale, refinancing, or transfer of either the land or the wind energy project.

A promise of future restoration is not enough. A fully costed, independently secured, inflation-adjusted bond should be lodged before construction begins and remain enforceable throughout the entire lifetime of the project and beyond.

I respectfully request that this be made a mandatory condition of any planning approval for wind Turbines and that clear responsibility for long-term reinstatement be established from the outset.

Conclusion

Having regard to:

- the extensive refusal history associated with this site,
- the withdrawal of previous applications,
- the previous refusals by Clare County Council under Planning References P21370 and 211226,
- the refusal by An Bord Pleanála under Appeal Ref. PL03.312728,
- the addition of more turbines in this proposal
- the excessive scale and visual dominance of the development,
- the cumulative landscape impacts,
- the serious impacts on residential amenity,
- the likely negative effect on nearby residential properties,

- the environmental and hydrological concerns,
- and the unsuitability of the receiving environment for an industrial-scale development of this magnitude,

I respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse permission for the proposed Strategic Infrastructure Development under Case Reference PAX03.324270.

Yours faithfully,

Bridget O'Brien

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