

Martin O'Brien
Lackamore
Miltown Malbay
Co Clare
18/06/2026

Re: Observation and Objection to Proposed Slieveacurry Wind Farm Development
Case Reference: PAX03.324270
Applicant: Slieveacurry Limited

I wish to submit my formal objection to the proposed Slieveacurry Strategic Infrastructure Development consisting of 9 wind turbines with proposed heights of 175 metres in my locality in County Clare.

As somebody living in the area affected by this proposal, I believe the scale, concentration and cumulative impact of the turbines now proposed would have a serious and unacceptable impact on the local landscape, nearby homes, the wider community, residential amenity and the rural character of west Clare.

This application must be considered in the context of the extensive planning history associated with the site. Previous applications relating to this development have already been refused multiple times by both Clare County Council and An Bord Pleanála.

The planning history includes:

- Planning Ref. P20806 – withdrawn by the developer,
- Planning Ref. P21370 – refused by Clare County Council,
- Planning Ref. 211226 – refused by Clare County Council,
- Appeal Ref. PL03.312728 – refused by An Bord Pleanála / An Coimisiún Pleanála on 16 May 2024.

The repeated refusals clearly demonstrate longstanding and unresolved concerns regarding the suitability of this location for a wind energy development of this scale.

While the current proposal may involve turbines of a similar height to previous applications, the increased number and concentration of turbines proposed would further intensify the visual, residential and environmental impacts previously identified by both Clare County Council and An Bord Pleanála.

Additional Previous Refusal Grounds by Clare County Council

The refusal decisions issued by Clare County Council under Planning References P21/370 and P21/1226 are highly relevant to the current application and clearly demonstrate that serious concerns already exist regarding this location and the suitability of large-scale wind turbine development within this landscape.

In refusing permission under both applications, Clare County Council concluded that the proposed turbine structures, by reason of their height, scale and siting on an open and exposed upland landscape, would constitute a prominent and visually intrusive feature from both local and long-range viewpoints.

The Council further concluded that, when taken together with existing and permitted wind turbines in the area, the development would result in an excessive proliferation and overconcentration of wind turbines which would negatively alter the character of the rural landscape and seriously injure the visual amenities of the area.

These concerns are even more relevant to the current proposal given the increased concentration and cumulative impact of turbines now proposed within the area.

Clare County Council also concluded in its previous refusal decisions that the scale and siting of the turbines, combined with their proximity to residential properties, would seriously injure residential amenity due to:

- noise and disturbance,
- visual overbearing effects,
- shadow flicker,
- and the cumulative impact arising from existing and permitted wind farms.

Importantly, Clare County Council also stated that the proposed turbines would be visually overbearing on existing residential properties and would negatively impact the value and attractiveness of nearby homes.

The Council further raised serious concerns regarding ecological impacts, particularly in relation to the cumulative impact on bird species including the Hen Harrier, an Annex I protected species under the Birds Directive.

Additional concerns identified by Clare County Council included:

- peatland and ground stability,
- hydrology and water management,
- risks associated with peat excavation and drainage,
- and the adequacy of environmental protection measures proposed as part of the development.

It is highly significant that these concerns were sufficient to result in repeated refusals by Clare County Council and were subsequently upheld by An Bord Pleanála under Appeal Reference PL03.312728.

Support from Previous An Bord Pleanála Inspector's Report and Observer Concerns

I also wish to refer the Board to matters raised within the previous Inspector's Report relating to Appeal Ref. PL03.312728, which remain highly relevant to the current application.

The Inspector's Report records that Clare County Council specifically requested that the Board uphold the refusal decision due to concerns relating to:

- cumulative visual impact with the existing Slieve Callan Wind Farm,
- the open and elevated nature of the landscape,
- injury to visual amenity,
- cumulative noise and disturbance impacts on residents,
- impacts on Hen Harrier habitats,
- and peat stability concerns.

The report also records extensive submissions from local residents and community groups expressing serious concern regarding:

- over proliferation of wind farms in the locality,
- turbines being visually overbearing on nearby communities,
- inadequate community consultation,
- shadow flicker and noise pollution,
- peat instability and bog slide risk,
- impacts on biodiversity and protected bird species,
- road safety and unsuitable access routes,
- impacts on tourism,
- impacts on farming and environmental schemes,
- and adverse impacts on residential amenity.

Particular concern was raised regarding:

- the risk of peat slippage and bog instability on steep upland terrain,
- impacts on wells, rivers and watercourses,
- the presence of Hen Harrier, Curlew, Kestrel and Marsh Fritillary habitats,
- and the cumulative impact of large-scale turbine development on the wider area.

The Inspector's Report also records submissions from residents living beside the existing Slieve Callan Wind Farm who stated that the turbines had become significantly more intrusive and overbearing than originally anticipated and that quality of life had been negatively affected due to noise, shadow flicker and visual dominance. Concerns were also raised regarding impacts on television and telecommunications signals.

It is highly significant that many of the concerns raised previously by residents, Clare County Council and third-party observers remain directly relevant to the current proposal.

In my opinion, the current application would further intensify the cumulative industrialisation of the area and would add to the existing burden already experienced by local residents and communities.

Cumulative Impact and Overconcentration of Turbines

The Board must carefully consider the very significant cumulative impact arising from existing and proposed wind energy developments already affecting the area.

This locality has already experienced repeated wind farm applications and substantial turbine development over recent years. Existing developments, including Slieve Callan with 29 wind turbines, together with proposed developments such as Illaunbaun Wind farm and

Slievenalicka wind farm, are surrounding communities and these communities with large-scale industrial wind energy infrastructure.

The existing turbines have already significantly altered the character of the landscape. Local residents are now being asked to absorb even more industrial-scale infrastructure into what is already an overburdened rural area.

The cumulative concentration of turbines within one locality is excessive and would:

- seriously erode the scenic quality and rural character of the area,
- damage the visual amenities of west Clare,
- place an unreasonable burden on nearby residents,
- and fundamentally alter the identity of the countryside.

In my opinion, the area has already made more than its fair contribution towards renewable energy generation and there must be reasonable limits to the concentration and scale of industrial wind energy developments permitted within any one rural locality.

The proposed turbines would be visible across an extensive area, potentially from Kerry to Galway, and would permanently alter the appearance and identity of the surrounding countryside.

Residential Amenity, Health and Wellbeing Concerns

I am deeply concerned about the impact this proposed development would have on nearby residents, homes and families living in the area.

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

- excessive visual dominance,
- continuous turbine movement,
- shadow flicker,
- noise and low frequency sound,
- aviation and turbine lighting,
- and the loss of peace, tranquillity and rural character.

The visual impact on nearby homes and residents would be severe. Residents should be entitled to enjoy reasonable peace, privacy and rural tranquillity within their homes. Instead, this proposal would create a constant industrial presence within the landscape.

I am also concerned about the impact on health and wellbeing. International health guidance, including guidance published by the World Health Organization, recognises that environmental noise can negatively affect sleep, wellbeing and quality of life.

Given the scale and concentration of the turbines now proposed, I believe a much more precautionary approach is required regarding separation distances from homes and residential properties.

The proposal raises serious concerns regarding:

- sleep disturbance,
- stress and anxiety,
- cumulative noise impacts,
- continuous visual movement,
- and the long-term effects of living in close proximity to industrial-scale turbines.

Where uncertainty exists regarding long-term health and residential amenity impacts, the precautionary principle should apply.

Communities are repeatedly asked to place trust in public authorities, scientific guidance and national institutions during periods of public health concern and emergency. It is therefore important that major developers and planning authorities also demonstrate respect for recognised health guidance and for the wellbeing of rural communities living closest to such developments.

I am further concerned that the proposal would negatively affect the value, attractiveness and marketability of nearby homes and properties due to the scale and visual dominance of the turbines.

Environmental, Ecological and Infrastructure Concerns

In addition to the visual and residential impacts, I believe there are also serious concerns regarding:

- road safety and the suitability of local roads,
- disruption during construction,
- impacts on wildlife and habitats,
- water quality and hydrology,
- peat and soil stability,
- and the long-term environmental effects of such a large-scale development.

Previous refusals and appeal decisions associated with this site have already identified concerns relating to environmental, ecological and landscape impacts. Those concerns remain highly relevant to the current proposal.

West Clare is internationally recognised for its scenic beauty, tourism value and rural identity. Developments of this scale risk undermining the very qualities that make the area attractive to residents and visitors alike.

While renewable energy development is important, I do not believe every location is suitable for industrial-scale wind energy infrastructure. In my opinion, this area has already carried more than its fair share of wind energy development.

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.

For all of the reasons outlined above, including:

- the extensive refusal history associated with this site,
- the excessive cumulative concentration of turbines in the area,
- the serious impacts on residential amenity,
- the health and wellbeing concerns of local residents,

- the likely negative impact on nearby homes and properties,
- and the environmental and landscape concerns associated with the proposal,

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

Yours faithfully,



Martin O'Brien