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Miltown Malbay

Co Clare

19/06/2026

To: An Coimisiún Pleanála

Re: Submission in Opposition to Proposed Slieveacurry Wind Farm Development
Case Reference: PAX03.324270
Applicant: Slieveacurry Limited

I wish to lodge this submission in objection to the proposed Slieveacurry Strategic Infrastructure Development comprising 9 wind turbines with proposed heights of approximately 175 metres

Having considered the scale and cumulative nature of the proposed development, I believe the proposal would result in unacceptable impacts on the landscape, residential amenity, environmental integrity and rural character of west Clare.

This proposal cannot be viewed in isolation and must instead be assessed against the extensive planning history associated with this location.

Previous applications connected to this site have already been refused or withdrawn, including:

- Planning Ref. P20806 – withdrawn,
- 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.
- Strategic Infrastructure Development Reference ABP-321892.

I note that the proposed development has been brought forward as a Strategic Infrastructure Development under Case Reference ABP-321892. While the SID process provides for direct consideration by An Coimisiún Pleanála, I respectfully submit that the Board should attach significant weight to the planning history of the site, including the previous refusals by Clare County Council and the refusal under Appeal Ref. PL03.312728. The concerns previously identified regarding landscape impact, cumulative effects, residential amenity and environmental sensitivities remain highly relevant to the current proposal and should be carefully examined notwithstanding the procedural route through which the application is now being considered.

The repeated refusals clearly indicate that longstanding planning concerns regarding this location have not been satisfactorily resolved.

Of particular importance are the findings previously reached by Clare County Council in refusing permission for earlier applications. The Council concluded that turbines of this nature and scale would constitute visually intrusive and dominant structures within an open upland landscape and would seriously injure the visual amenities and rural character of the area.

Clare County Council further concluded that the cumulative effect arising from existing and permitted wind farms would result in an excessive proliferation of turbines within the locality.

These concerns remain directly relevant to the current application.

These proposed turbine heights are higher than the current 29 number on Slieve Callan in the same area and would increase concentration and overall cumulative impact of turbine development within the surrounding area significantly intensifies the burden already placed on local communities.

The wider area has already experienced substantial wind farm development over many years. Existing turbine developments associated with Slieve Callan, together with existing and proposed developments at Illaunbaun wind farm Ltd and Slievenalicka Locally owned turbine ltd, are progressively surrounding rural communities with industrial-scale wind infrastructure.

Many residents now describe the cumulative pattern of development as creating a “horseshoe effect” surrounding homes and communities.

The addition of a further 9 turbines of this scale would represent an excessive overconcentration of industrial energy infrastructure within one rural landscape.

In my opinion, the area has already made a substantial contribution towards renewable energy generation and there must be reasonable limits to the concentration of such developments within any one locality.

The proposal would fundamentally alter the character of the surrounding countryside and would further industrialise an area valued for its scenery, rural identity and environmental quality.

The turbines proposed would be visible over an extensive geographical area and would dominate both local and distant views. The visual impact would extend far beyond the immediate site and would significantly diminish the scenic quality of west Clare.

I am also deeply concerned regarding the likely impact on nearby homes and residential amenity.

The continuous movement of turbine blades, aviation lighting, shadow flicker and turbine visibility would create an overbearing and intrusive environment for nearby residents.

The experience of residents already living near existing wind farm developments within the locality should not be ignored. Concerns previously raised before An Bord Pleanála included

complaints relating to excessive turbine noise, shadow flicker, visual dominance and impacts on quality of life.

The previous Inspector's Report relating to Appeal Ref. PL03.312728 also records concerns raised regarding:

- cumulative visual impact,
- injury to visual amenity,
- peat stability,
- impacts on Hen Harrier habitats,
- turbine noise and disturbance,
- biodiversity impacts,
- unsuitable road infrastructure,
- impacts on tourism,
- and inadequate community engagement.

Those concerns remain highly relevant to the current proposal.

I am particularly concerned regarding the cumulative effect of additional turbine development on residential wellbeing and mental health within the community.

International health guidance, including guidance published by the World Health Organization, recognises that environmental noise and continuous disturbance can negatively affect sleep quality, stress levels and overall wellbeing.

Given the scale of the proposed turbines and the existing concentration of wind energy development already surrounding local communities, I believe a far more precautionary approach should apply regarding residential protection and setback distances.

The proposal also gives rise to serious concerns regarding:

- peatland stability,
- bog slippage risk,
- impacts on rivers, wells and watercourses,
- impacts on protected bird species including Hen Harrier, Curlew and Kestrel,
- habitat disturbance,
- and impacts on environmental farming and conservation schemes.

The previous Inspector's Report records concerns regarding steep upland peat conditions and the possibility of peat instability and bog movement associated with large-scale construction works in this landscape.

In addition, the scale of construction activity required for turbines of this size would place major pressure on the local road network and rural infrastructure.

Construction traffic, abnormal loads and road widening works would likely result in prolonged disruption, road safety concerns and disturbance for local residents and landowners.

West Clare is internationally recognised for its scenic landscape, tourism value and rural environment. The continuing proliferation of industrial-scale wind developments risks

causing long-term damage to the very qualities upon which the local tourism economy depends.

While renewable energy development is important, this does not mean that every landscape is suitable for continued industrial-scale turbine expansion.

In my opinion, the cumulative environmental, residential and visual burden already placed on this locality has reached an unacceptable level.

I wish to formally request that all landowners 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, estimated at approximately 35 years.

As landowners are financially benefiting from the development through lease payments, annual income, and long-term commercial gain, they must also share direct responsibility for ensuring that the land is fully restored once the turbines reach the end of their life. It is not reasonable that neighbouring communities, future generations, local authorities, or taxpayers should carry the risk of decommissioning industrial infrastructure placed on private agricultural 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 landowner's successors, the wider community, or the State.

For this reason, the bond must not rely solely on the developer's financial position. 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.

Most formal planning conditions usually seek the bond from the developer, but objectors have repeatedly argued that this is not enough because:

- Developers can dissolve
- Projects are sold multiple times
- Liability becomes difficult to enforce decades later

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.

Such reinstatement should include, but not be limited to:

- Full removal of turbines, towers, substations, cables, and associated infrastructure
- Removal of concrete foundations to an agreed agricultural depth
- Removal of crane hardstands and access roads where appropriate

- Restoration of drainage systems, hedgerows, and field boundaries
- Full return of the land to its original agricultural condition suitable for farming 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.

As these projects extend across decades and often beyond one generation, this obligation must pass through generations and remain permanently attached to the land so that future heirs are not left with either the environmental damage or the financial liability of incomplete decommissioning.

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

No family farm should carry a 35-year industrial liability without legally secured financial protection for full land restoration.

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 properly reinstated at the end of the project's life.

For this reason, the landowners should be required to have their own legally binding reinstatement bond in place alongside the developer's bond, ensuring full removal of turbines, concrete foundations, access roads, and associated infrastructure, and the return of the land to its original agricultural condition. This bond should remain attached to the land and be enforceable across generations.

If An Coimisiún Pleanála grants planning permission without including a landowner bond as a formal condition, objectors may seek legal review of the planning decision where appropriate, and continue to press for stronger planning conditions before any development proceeds.

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

I trust this matter will be given serious consideration.

For all of the reasons outlined above, including:

- the repeated refusal history associated with the site,
- the excessive cumulative concentration of turbines within the area,
- the serious impacts on visual and residential amenity,
- the environmental and ecological concerns identified previously,
- the likely impact on nearby homes and communities,

- Devaluation of home in the area,
- Loss of phone and internet coverage .
- and the continuing industrialisation of the rural landscape,

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

Yours faithfully,



Nora O'Brien