

Muingmore Wind Farm — Observation Template

Case Ref: PAX16.324387 — An Coimisiún Pleanála

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An Coimisiún Pleanála

64 Marlborough Street

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Re: Observation on Proposed Muingmore Wind Farm Development (Case Ref: PAX16.324387)

A Chara,

My name is Caroline. I lived in Doohoma for many years and continue to have part ownership of a property there. I continue to visit the area regularly with my family, and I am writing to object to the proposed Muingmore Wind Farm.

The area is a place of wild, untouched natural beauty and I have numerous concerns regarding the potential impact of the development. It would have a profound negative effect on the areas natural beauty and character of the landscape, and the potential for noise and sound pollution for nearby residents and communities. Any large-scale development of this nature has the potential to disturb habitats, wildlife and ecosystems, through the construction of access roads, turbines and the associated infrastructure.

Turbines of the height proposed for this site, up to 180 metres to blade tip, are a different order of scale to anything currently in this landscape. This area experiences strong, unbroken Atlantic wind for much of the year, and I am seriously concerned about the noise these turbines would generate in those conditions, close to homes, for the guaranteed 35-year lifespan of the project.

Although my home does not fall within the shadow flicker zone for the proposed turbine layout, my sisters home does. Shadow flicker of this kind can have a real effect on people's health and quality of life over months and years, and I am asking the Board to look carefully at what that would mean for homes in this position.

This area supports wildlife that would be put at serious risk by a development of this scale, including species such as the kestrel, barn owl, heron, cuckoo and corncrake, as well as otters and native lizards, and it lies on a route used by migrating swans. Construction on deep peatland of this kind risks lasting damage to habitats that cannot be replaced.

Blacksod Bay is a protected site, home to rare maerl beds, seals, otters and internationally significant numbers of wintering birds. The proposed site sits on peatland that drains directly towards the bay, and construction of this scale carries a real risk of silt and runoff reaching that water, damaging habitats that would not recover within any timeframe that matters to the species living there now.

A development of this scale, this close to residential properties, is likely to have a significant negative effect on property values in the area, at real cost to families who have invested their lives here.

This is a designated tourism area. The Wild Mayo Destination and Experience Development Plan, backed by Fáilte Ireland and Mayo County Council, depends on this landscape remaining wild and undeveloped. Thirteen turbines at up to 180 metres in height, visible for miles, would undermine the very qualities that strategy is built around, and put at risk the businesses and livelihoods that depend on tourism here.

There are thousands of acres of land already identified and designated for renewable energy development elsewhere in the country, without the same level of harm to blanket bog, protected habitats and established communities. Where a less damaging alternative exists, I believe the Board is entitled to ask why this particular site has been chosen.

Mayo County Council's own Renewable Energy Strategy, adopted only last week, identifies peatland such as this as unsuitable for wind energy development, because of the damage that construction on deep, waterlogged bog can do to carbon storage, water quality and the surrounding environment. This is the council's own considered judgement, reached independently of this application, and it is difficult to see how this development can be reconciled with it.

I want to be clear that I am not against renewable energy, and I understand the importance of it for the country. But this particular site is not the right place for a project of this scale.

For the reasons set out above, I respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse permission for the proposed Muingmore Wind Farm development.

Yours sincerely,

Caroline Flynn

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