

Colin Holmes

Doohoma

Ballina

Co. Mayo

F26 YA38

05 August 2026

An Coimisiún Pleanála

64 Marlborough Street

Dublin 1

D01 V902

Case Reference: PAX16.324387

Re: Proposed development of Muingmore Wind Farm — 13 wind turbines, 110kV substation, battery energy storage system (BESS) and associated infrastructure, townlands of Muingmore, Doolough, Tristia, Moneynierin and Bangor, County Mayo.

Applicant: RWE Renewables Ireland Limited.

A Chara,

I wish to submit the following observation in respect of the above-named planning application, in accordance with Section 37E of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and Article 217 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).

1. MY DETAILS

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2. SUBJECT MATTER AND OBSERVATION

Landscape Character & Visual Impact

The landscape of the Erris region is one of its defining characteristics. Although I do not live directly at the proposed site, I travel through daily on my way to and from work, on my way to Belmullet town, and I spend a substantial amount of time in the area surrounding the proposed wind farm. It is an open, expansive and largely unspoilt landscape, where the natural features of the bog, coastline and surrounding hills dominate the views. The introduction of thirteen wind turbines, each reaching approximately 180 metres in height, would forever alter the character of this landscape. These structures would be visible over a wide area and would become the dominant feature of the skyline from many viewpoints across Erris. In my view, this industrial-scale development is not compatible with the unique rural landscape that makes this part of County Mayo so special.

Recreation, Cycling & the Outdoors

I am a keen cyclist and regularly cycle the roads throughout Erris, including those surrounding the proposed development site. I also enjoy running, walking and spending time outdoors throughout the year. The attraction of these activities is not simply the exercise itself, but the opportunity to experience the area's peace, open landscapes, natural beauty and abundant wildlife. The proposed development would permanently alter that experience. Instead of travelling through a quiet rural landscape, these routes would be dominated by large industrial structures, their movement and associated operational noise. I believe this would significantly diminish the enjoyment of outdoor recreation for both local residents and visitors who come to experience the unspoilt character of the area.

Biodiversity & Wildlife

One of the greatest assets of the Erris region is its rich biodiversity. The blanket bogs, wetlands, coastal habitats and surrounding countryside provide important habitat for a wide range of wildlife, including protected birds, bats, otters and many species of pollinating insects. I am particularly aware that the Mullet Peninsula in Erris, supports Ireland's last remaining stronghold of the Great Yellow Bumblebee (*Bombus distinguendus*), one of the country's rarest and most endangered pollinators. Given the ecological importance of this area, I believe any development with the potential to disturb or fragment habitats should be approached with great caution. While I recognise that mitigation measures may be

proposed, I remain concerned that the cumulative effects of construction and long-term operation on local biodiversity have not been fully addressed.

Blanket Bog & Peatlands

The proposed development is located on an extensive area of blanket bog, one of Ireland's most valuable natural habitats. Blanket bogs are internationally recognised ecosystems that store significant quantities of carbon, regulate water flow and support specialised plants and wildlife found in very few other environments. Excavation for turbine foundations, access roads, drainage works and associated infrastructure has the potential to permanently disturb this fragile habitat. In addition to the loss of biodiversity, damage to peatlands can reduce their ability to store carbon and regulate water naturally. Given the increasing importance placed on peatland restoration as part of Ireland's climate and biodiversity commitments, I believe developments affecting intact blanket bog should be subject to the highest level of scrutiny.

Water Quality & The Marine Environment

I am concerned about the potential impact of the proposed development on local watercourses and the wider marine environment. The blanket bog drains through the Doolough Stream into Blacksod Bay, an area recognised for its ecological importance and rich marine biodiversity. I understand that the applicant's own assessment identifies the Doolough Stream as already being under environmental pressure. In those circumstances, I believe particular care must be taken to ensure that construction activities do not contribute further sediment, peat or other pollutants to the catchment. The health of inland watercourses is directly connected to the health of the coastal environment, and any deterioration could have wider implications for fish, shellfish, marine mammals and the habitats that make Blacksod Bay such an important natural resource.

Tourism & the Local Economy

The Erris region has built a strong reputation as one of Ireland's most spectacular natural landscapes. Visitors are drawn here by its dramatic coastline, beaches, blanket bogs, wildlife, dark skies and peaceful rural environment. These natural assets contribute significantly to the local tourism economy and support many small businesses throughout

the area. I myself grew up in a hospitality business and have experienced visitor's reactions to the area first hand. While renewable energy has an important role to play in Ireland's future, I am concerned that the scale of this proposed development risks undermining many of the very qualities that attract visitors to the region. In my view, protecting the landscape, biodiversity and natural character of Erris is not only an environmental issue but also an important economic consideration for the long-term sustainability of the area.

Cumulative Impact

The Erris region already accommodates one of Ireland's largest wind farms at Oweninny. The cumulative impact of introducing a further thirteen turbines of approximately 180 metres in height should not be considered in isolation. Instead, consideration should be given to the combined visual effect of multiple large-scale wind energy developments across the wider landscape. There comes a point at which the incremental addition of further turbines changes the character of an entire region. In my opinion, this proposal would move beyond an acceptable level of cumulative landscape change and would further industrialise an area that is valued for its natural beauty and sense of place.

3. CONCLUSION

While I recognise the important role that renewable energy has to play in helping Ireland meet its climate and energy targets, and I support the transition to cleaner sources of energy, I do not believe that every location is suitable for development of this scale. In my view, the proposed Muingmore Wind Farm would have significant and lasting impacts on the landscape, biodiversity, blanket bog, water environment, tourism and the overall character of the Erris region. When considered alongside the existing Oweninny Wind Farm, the cumulative impact of this proposal would fundamentally alter an area that is widely valued for its natural beauty, tranquillity and environmental importance.

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

Sincerely,

Colin Holmes

05 August 2026