

Eithne Holmes

Doohoma

Ballina

Co. Mayo

F26C3W0

6th Aug 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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Although I spend part of the year living elsewhere, Erris has always been home. I was born here, own a house here, and continue to spend approximately half of every year here because of the unique qualities that this landscape offers. It is one of the few places where the natural environment still dominates the horizon, with expansive blanket bog, rugged coastline, mountains and

uninterrupted views creating a powerful sense of openness and tranquillity. In my view, introducing thirteen wind turbines of approximately 180 metres in height would fundamentally alter the character of this landscape. Their scale and visibility would extend far beyond the immediate site and would change the experience of the wider Erris region for residents and visitors alike.

One of the greatest pleasures of returning home is being able to share this remarkable place with family and friends who visit throughout the year. Visitors are consistently struck by the area's natural beauty, its peaceful atmosphere and its sense of remoteness. These are qualities that cannot be manufactured and, once lost, cannot easily be restored. I am concerned that a development of this scale would significantly alter visitors' experience of the area and diminish one of the region's greatest assets. Protecting the landscape is not simply about preserving views; it is about preserving the experience that draws people here in the first place.

One of the things I value most about living in Erris is the opportunity to experience genuine darkness. During the winter months I particularly enjoy walking at night across quiet rural roads and open landscapes, where the absence of artificial light allows me to experience the stars, the moon and the natural environment in a way that is becoming increasingly rare. The aviation warning lights required on turbines of this height would introduce a permanent source of artificial light into this landscape every night throughout the lifetime of the development. In my view, this would significantly diminish one of the area's most unique and valuable natural assets. It also appears inconsistent with the work being undertaken in County Mayo to protect and promote its internationally recognised dark skies.

The landscape of Erris is central to my sense of identity and belonging. It is the reason I continue to return here year after year and spend so much of my time in this community. There is a feeling of peace, space and connection with nature that is increasingly difficult to find elsewhere. This proposal would not simply change the physical landscape; it would change the character of the place itself. I believe that sense of place is an important part of the area's cultural and natural heritage and should be protected for future generations.

Erris is a community with a strong connection to its landscape and natural environment. While I appreciate the importance of renewable energy, I also believe that developments of this scale should respect the communities in which they are located and the qualities that make those communities unique. Through conversations with family, friends and local residents, it is clear to me that many people are concerned about the cumulative impact of continued large-scale wind energy

development in the region. I believe there comes a point where the protection of landscape, biodiversity and community identity must be given equal consideration alongside energy policy.

One of the reasons I spend so much time outdoors is the opportunity to observe the rich wildlife that makes Erris such a special place. The blanket bogs, wetlands and coastal habitats support a remarkable diversity of birds, mammals and insects. I am particularly conscious that the Mullet Peninsula, within the Erris region, supports Ireland's last remaining stronghold of the Great Yellow Bumblebee (*Bombus distinguendus*), one of our rarest and most endangered pollinating insects. I remain concerned that the cumulative effects of construction and long-term operation could adversely affect habitats that have developed over centuries and support species of significant conservation importance.

The natural environment of Erris does not end at the shoreline. The blanket bog, streams and rivers are connected to the marine waters of Blacksod Bay, creating an interconnected ecosystem that supports fish, seabirds, shellfish, seals, dolphins and other marine wildlife. I am concerned that disturbance to peatlands and changes to water quality during construction could have consequences beyond the immediate site. Given the ecological importance of Blacksod Bay, I believe every precaution should be taken to avoid introducing additional pressures into this sensitive environment.

The blanket bogs of Erris are among the region's most valuable natural assets. They are internationally important habitats that support biodiversity, store large quantities of carbon and play a vital role in regulating water. These landscapes have taken thousands of years to develop and cannot simply be recreated once disturbed. The scale of excavation, drainage and construction associated with this proposal has the potential to permanently alter these peatland habitats. At a time when Ireland is investing heavily in peatland restoration, I believe intact blanket bog should be afforded the highest level of protection wherever possible.

One of my favourite ways to experience Erris is simply by walking, whether along the coast, across quiet rural roads or through the open landscape during the darker winter months. I also enjoy camping in remote locations where it is possible to experience nature with very little human intrusion. These experiences depend upon the area's tranquillity, darkness and open landscapes. The proposed development would introduce a dominant industrial presence into many of these views and would fundamentally alter the experience of exploring this remarkable part of County Mayo.

County Mayo has successfully built a reputation based on its outstanding natural environment, the Wild Atlantic Way, its dark skies, wildlife, outdoor recreation and unspoilt landscapes. These qualities are central to the county's identity and are actively promoted to visitors from Ireland and abroad. In my view, developments of this scale should be carefully assessed to ensure they do not undermine the very characteristics that distinguish Mayo from other parts of the country. Protecting these natural assets is important not only from an environmental perspective but also for the long-term social, cultural and economic wellbeing of the county.

For me, some of the most peaceful and restorative moments are winter evenings spent walking beneath a naturally dark sky, accompanied only by the sounds of the wind, wildlife and the sea. It is an experience that has become increasingly rare, and one that I believe deserves to be protected in Erris.

I respectfully ask An Coimisiún Pleanála to refuse permission for the proposed Muingmore Wind Farm under case reference **PAX16.324387**.

Yours sincerely

Eithne Holmes

6th Aug 2026