

ERRIS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Promoting Trade, Tourism and Sustainable Development in the Barony of Erris, County Mayo

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7 August 2026

An Coimisiún Pleanála

64 Marlborough Street

Dublin 1

D01 V902

Re: Proposed Muingmore Wind Farm — Case Reference PAX16.324387

Applicant: RWE Renewables Ireland Limited

A Chara,

I write as President of the Erris Chamber of Commerce and Industry to submit this formal observation in opposition to the proposed Muingmore Wind Farm. The Chamber represents the commercial, tourism, and enterprise interests of the Barony of Erris. Our members are the businesses of this area — and it is on their behalf, and in the starkest possible terms, that I am writing today.

Businesses in This Area Will Close

This is not a warning about abstract economic harm or a general concern about tourism potential. I am telling An Coimisiún Pleanála directly: if this development is permitted, businesses in the Barony of Erris will close. Not immediately, not all at once, but with the certainty of cause and effect.

The economy of Erris depends on what this place is. It depends on the coastline, the landscape, the quiet, the dark skies, the sense of being somewhere genuinely unspoiled. Every visitor who chooses Erris over somewhere else does so because of those qualities. Every accommodation provider, restaurant, activity operator, fishing guide, watersports business, and craft producer in this area is selling — directly or indirectly — the experience of being in this landscape.

That landscape, with 13 turbines at 180 metres visible from the coast, the bay, the Wild Atlantic Way, and virtually every tourist viewpoint in the area, is a different landscape. Not slightly different — fundamentally different. The Chamber's members know this. They have watched what has happened in other communities and they are frightened.

The Wild Atlantic Way Is Not Abstract

The Wild Atlantic Way passes through the Barony of Erris. That designation is not a label — it is the commercial foundation on which the tourism economy of this area has been built over the past decade. The accommodation businesses, the hospitality sector, the activity providers, and the retail traders who depend on visitor spending are all beneficiaries of that designation and everything it represents.

The proposed turbines are visible from the Wild Atlantic Way route. They are visible from Blacksod Point. They are visible from the ferry routes that carry visitors across Blacksod Bay. They will be visible at night, lit by mandatory aviation warning lights, from every dark-sky observation point in the area — including the Mayo Dark Sky Park, which the Chamber has supported as a tourism asset of national significance. The Dark Sky Park's value as a tourism destination is directly dependent on the absence of artificial light at horizon level. Mandatory turbine aviation lighting destroys that value as effectively as a housing estate.

Fishing Families and Marine Businesses

The Chamber's membership includes fishing families who have worked Blacksod Bay and its waters for generations. Their livelihoods depend not only on the fishery itself but on the ecosystem that sustains it — the maerl beds, the seagrass, the water quality, the marine habitats that the applicant's own documents confirm are directly connected to the runoff pathway from this development.

If the water quality of Blacksod Bay deteriorates as a result of construction-phase sediment loading from a 455-hectare peat disturbance, the fishing families of this area have no alternative. They

cannot move their fishery. They cannot wait for the ecosystem to recover. They lose their livelihood. That is not a theoretical risk — it is the direct consequence of what the applicant's own documents describe.

The Accommodation and Hospitality Sector

The Chamber is aware of accommodation providers, bed and breakfast operators, and self-catering businesses in the area who are already experiencing booking uncertainty as a result of this planning application. Guests are asking questions. Group bookings are being hedged. The uncertainty alone — before a spade has gone in the ground — is already having a commercial effect.

If permission is granted, that uncertainty becomes certainty. The businesses that depend on visitors coming to this area for its landscape and tranquillity will face a permanent structural change in their market proposition. Some will adapt. Some will not survive.

Mayo County Council Said No. The RES Says No. The Chamber Says No.

Mayo County Council told the applicant directly, on 16 January 2025, that it was "not happy with the application and not comfortable to give green light at this stage." The planning authority for this county recorded its opposition fourteen months before the application was lodged.

On 13 July 2026, during the observation period for this application, Mayo County Council formally adopted the Renewable Energy Strategy for County Mayo as Variation No. 2 to the County Development Plan. That strategy designates the Muingmore site as Unsuitable for wind energy development. It is now the operative law of this county.

The Erris Chamber of Commerce and Industry adds its voice to that democratic record. The elected representatives of County Mayo said no. The adopted planning policy of County Mayo says no. The business community of Erris says no.

Formal Request

The Erris Chamber of Commerce and Industry formally requests that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse permission for the proposed Muingmore Wind Farm in its entirety. We ask the Board to recognise that the economic life of the Barony of Erris is inseparable from the integrity of its landscape, and that this development would cause irreversible damage to both.

Mise le meas,

Brian Bakeberg

President, Erris Chamber of Commerce and Industry

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