

George Sweeney

Shragraddy,

Bangor-Erris,

Ballina,

County Mayo,

The Secretary,
An Coimisiún Pleanála,
64 Marlborough Street,
Dublin 1,
D01 V902

RE: FORMAL OBJECTION TO THE PROPOSED MUINGMORE WIND FARM STRATEGIC
INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

PAX16.324387

Dear Sir/Madam,

I hereby submit this formal objection to the proposed Muingmore Wind Farm development.

I am a lifelong farmer from North Mayo and have spent my life living and working in this part of the county. Although my farm is located approximately 15 kilometres from the proposed development, I regularly travel through the Muingmore area and have done so for many years. Like many local people, I value this part of Mayo for its open landscape, natural beauty and peaceful rural character.

Having reviewed the planning application and the supporting Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), I respectfully submit that the proposed development is contrary to the principles of proper planning and sustainable development due to its likely significant adverse effects on the receiving environment, landscape character, biodiversity and the wider rural community.

My objection is based upon the following principal concerns:

1. Significant adverse impacts on the landscape character, visual amenity and rural setting of Muingmore and the surrounding townlands.
2. Potential adverse effects on blanket bog, peatland habitats, biodiversity, watercourses and protected species.
3. Significant construction impacts arising from abnormal loads, heavy construction traffic, road safety risks, dust, vibration and prolonged disruption to local communities.
4. The industrialisation of a rural landscape that is recognised for its environmental quality, scenic value and ecological importance.

5. Failure to demonstrate that a development of this scale can be accommodated without disproportionate environmental impacts over its proposed 35-year operational lifetime.
6. Unacceptable cumulative impacts when considered alongside existing and proposed renewable energy developments across North Mayo.

The proposed development comprises 13 wind turbines of approximately 180 metres in height, together with a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), a 110kV substation, permanent access roads, underground cabling, drainage infrastructure and associated ancillary works extending across approximately 454 hectares, with a proposed operational life of 35 years.

In my opinion, this proposal represents the industrialisation of an area that has long been valued for its open countryside, blanket bog, peatlands and unspoilt landscape. While I do not live immediately beside the proposed development, the scale of the turbines means their visual influence will extend across a much wider area, fundamentally changing the character of this part of North Mayo.

As someone who has spent a lifetime farming in this county, I understand the importance of protecting the natural environment that supports our communities, agriculture and rural way of life. The landscape is one of Mayo's greatest assets, not only for those who live here but also for visitors and future generations. Once altered by development of this scale, those changes cannot easily be reversed.

I am also concerned about the environmental implications of constructing major infrastructure on blanket bog and peatland. The EIAR identifies sensitive peatland habitats, ecological connectivity to European designated conservation sites and several protected bird and bat species that may be affected by the development. Although mitigation measures are proposed, I am not satisfied that they provide sufficient certainty that these habitats and species can be adequately protected over the lifetime of the project.

The proposed construction programme, involving abnormal loads, road improvements and heavy construction traffic over an extended period, also raises legitimate concerns regarding road safety, disruption to local communities and the suitability of the rural road network to accommodate a project of this scale. The EIAR anticipates an 18–24 month construction programme involving substantial transport and infrastructure works.

While I fully support Ireland's transition towards renewable energy and recognise the importance of reducing carbon emissions, I do not believe that every location is appropriate for industrial-scale wind energy development. Renewable energy must be delivered in a way that respects environmentally sensitive landscapes, protects biodiversity and safeguards the character of rural communities.

For these reasons, I respectfully submit that the proposed Muingmore Wind Farm would give rise to significant adverse effects on the environment, landscape and rural character of North Mayo. In my opinion, the scale, location and intensity of the proposal are such that **it would** represent an excessive and inappropriate form of industrial development within a sensitive rural landscape.

Accordingly, I respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse planning permission for the proposed Muingmore Wind Farm. In the alternative, should the Board not be minded to refuse permission, I respectfully request that no decision be made until it is fully satisfied that all environmental, ecological, hydrological, traffic and cumulative impacts have been comprehensively assessed and can be effectively mitigated through enforceable planning conditions. In the absence of such certainty, planning permission should be refused.

Yours faithfully,

George Sweeney