

Observation in respect of Muingmore Wind Farm

Case Reference: PAX16.324387 / 324387

To: An Coimisiún Pleanála

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to make this observation in respect of the proposed Muingmore Wind Farm development.

I am a frequent visitor to my family home in Doolough village, beside the proposed development area. This is a peaceful rural part of Mayo, with homes, farms, bogland, wildlife, open views, quiet roads and dark skies. It is a place where people live and visit because of the natural landscape, the peace of rural Ireland and the strong sense of community.

Ever since I was a young child I have visited this area and stayed in this house multiple times a year to enjoy the peace and tranquility of the area and the beautiful natural landscape and wildlife, as well as connect with and spend quality time with family, friends and relatives. I now bring my own children to the house to enjoy the locality which I believe to be very beneficial for mine and my family's mental health and wellbeing.

If the proposed development goes ahead it will have catastrophic consequences for the natural wildlife, peace and quiet and I will no longer be able to enjoy this area and spend time with my family here. This would have a detrimental effect on my family and also for the local area which would lose out on revenue generated by tourism and frequent visitors like me to the area.

I strongly object to this proposed development. In my view, an industrial-scale wind farm, substation and large Battery Energy Storage System is not suitable for this sensitive rural area.

This part of Erris is special. The landscape, peatlands, wildlife, protected habitats, quiet roads and community life should be protected, not industrialised. The proposed turbines, roads, grid works, substation and BESS would completely change the character of the area.

1. European Protected Sites, SPAs, SACs and Nationally Protected Peatlands

This area must not be looked at in isolation. The proposed Muingmore Wind Farm is located within a wider sensitive landscape of peatlands, watercourses, coastal habitats, bird areas and European protected sites.

The planning authority must have full regard to nearby and connected protected areas, including:

- Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA, Site Code 004037
- Mullet/Blacksod Bay Complex SAC, Site Code 000470
- Tristia Bog NHA, Site Code 001566
- Bellacorick Bog Complex SAC, Site Code 001922
- Owenduff/Nephin Complex SAC, Site Code 000534
- Owenduff/Nephin Complex SPA, Site Code 004098
- Termoncarragh Lake and Annagh Machair SPA, Site Code 004093

Blacksod Bay is European protected. It is protected as part of Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA, which is important for birds, and also as part of Mullet/Blacksod Bay Complex SAC, which protects important coastal, marine and habitat interests.

The impact of this development must be assessed against the strict protection required for European sites. It is not enough to say that impacts can be managed later. The planning authority must be satisfied beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the development will not adversely affect the integrity of these protected sites.

This landscape is connected through bog, drains, streams, water movement, coastal habitats and bird movement. Birds and wildlife do not stay inside neat planning boundaries. A development of this scale could affect areas well beyond the turbine bases themselves.

2. Peatlands, bog and water quality

The proposed development is located in a sensitive peatland and bog landscape. Peatlands are not empty or unused land. They are living habitats, important carbon stores, water regulators and wildlife areas.

Any excavation, road building, turbine bases, cable trenches, drainage works, substation works or BESS construction could damage the peat and interfere with natural water movement. Once peatland is disturbed, drained or destabilised, it may not recover properly.

There is a real risk of peat erosion, sediment run-off and pollution entering drains, streams and downstream waters. This is especially serious because this wider area is connected to important wetland, coastal and protected habitats, including Blacksod Bay and Broad Haven.

A precautionary approach must be taken. General promises of mitigation should not be accepted where there is potential harm to peatland, water quality and protected habitats.

3. Birds and wildlife

This area is important for birds and wildlife. Species associated with the wider bog, coastal and wetland landscape include protected and vulnerable birds such as:

- Twite
- Corncrake
- Curlew
- Golden Plover
- Merlin
- Hen Harrier
- Chough
- Dunlin
- Lapwing
- Whooper Swan
- Geese and other migratory birds

The Twite is an important bird in the west of Ireland and its habitat should be protected. The Corncrake is also a very vulnerable and important bird species, and any area where it is recorded or recovering should be treated with great care.

Large turbines, rotating blades, lighting, construction noise, traffic, habitat loss and disturbance could all affect birds using this area. Birds move across bog, farmland, coast, wetland and open landscape. Their habitat should not be broken up or put under further pressure.

Protected wildlife such as otter, bats and other species also depend on quiet habitats, clean water and undisturbed natural areas. These impacts must be fully and properly assessed.

4. Landscape, rural character and peace

The proposed turbines would be extremely large and would dominate the skyline. They would be visible from homes, Doolough village, local roads, bogland, coastal areas and scenic routes.

This would not be a small change to the landscape. It would be a major industrial development in a rural area.

The peace of rural Ireland has real value. It is part of people's quality of life. It cannot be replaced by landscaping or community benefit payments. Once a development of this scale is built, the character of the place is permanently changed.

People living locally should not have to lose their open views, quiet surroundings, dark skies and peaceful rural environment.

5. Dark skies and lighting

The dark skies in this part of Mayo are very important. At night, this area is naturally dark and quiet. Turbine lighting, aviation lighting, substation lighting, security lighting and lighting from the BESS compound would change the night-time environment.

Light pollution can affect residents, wildlife, birds, bats and the rural character of the area. It can disturb sleep, reduce the sense of peace and damage the natural darkness of the landscape.

This impact should be treated seriously and not dismissed as minor.

6. Noise and infrasound

Noise from the proposed turbines would be a major issue for people living nearby. This is currently a quiet rural area, so even low-level turbine noise could be very noticeable, especially at night.

The assessment must include turbine noise, blade noise, low-frequency noise, transformer noise, substation noise, BESS/inverter noise, cooling systems and maintenance activity. These should be considered together, not separately.

Local residents should not have to live with constant mechanical noise or night-time disturbance in a place that is currently peaceful.

7. Shadow flicker

Shadow flicker is another serious issue for homes in the area. The developer's own shadow flicker maps show that houses within the assessed area may potentially experience shadow flicker.

There may also be homes outside the blue assessed area that could be affected, depending on turbine position, sun angle, topography and weather conditions.

Shadow flicker can affect people's comfort, health, sleep, concentration and enjoyment of their homes. It is not enough to say that mitigation can be applied later. There must be clear, binding shut-down measures if any home is affected.

No family or resident should be expected to live with repeated shadow flicker from industrial turbines near their home.

8. BESS / Battery Energy Storage System

The proposed Battery Energy Storage System is a major part of this project. It should not be treated as a small add-on.

A BESS brings its own risks and impacts, including fire risk, thermal runaway, noise, lighting, security fencing, visual impact, traffic, water contamination risk and emergency response issues.

The community needs clear information about the size, purpose and safety of the BESS. There must be a proper assessment of fire risk, emergency access, fumes, water pollution, evacuation issues and whether local emergency services would be able to respond safely and effectively.

Placing this type of industrial battery infrastructure in a rural peatland area near homes, villages and local roads raises serious questions.

9. Construction traffic and road safety

The construction phase would bring major disruption to the local area. Heavy traffic, abnormal loads, machinery, concrete lorries, stone deliveries, cranes and construction vehicles would have to use local roads.

These roads are used every day by residents, school buses, farmers, walkers, cyclists, older people and families. They were not designed for years of industrial construction traffic.

The development would create dust, noise, vibration, delays, road damage and road safety risks. The real-life impact on local people must be properly considered.

10. Cumulative impact

This development should not be assessed on its own. Erris has already carried a significant burden of energy infrastructure.

The cumulative impact of wind farms, grid works, substations, roads, BESS infrastructure and future renewable-energy development must be properly examined.

One project may look manageable on paper, but the reality for local people is the combined impact on homes, roads, wildlife, landscape, peace, dark skies and community life.

Conclusion

I respectfully ask An Coimisiún Pleanála to refuse permission for the proposed Muingmore Wind Farm development.

This is a peaceful rural area beside Doolough village, sensitive peatlands, protected habitats, Blacksod Bay, important bird areas, homes and communities. The proposed wind farm, BESS, substation and associated infrastructure would have unacceptable impacts on the landscape, dark skies, wildlife, peatland, water quality, local roads, residential amenity and rural quality of life.

This location is too sensitive and too close to homes, protected habitats and important peatland landscapes.

For these reasons, I ask that planning permission be refused.

Yours sincerely,

**Helen Wims
Carrowreagh Knox
Tubbercurry
Co Sligo F91ND0F**

4th August 2026