

Margaret & Sean Bilbow

Doolough

Geesala

Co.Mayo

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14.07.2026

To: An Coimisiún Pleanála

Re: Proposed Muingmore Wind Farm

Case Reference: PAX16.324387

Re: Formal Submission/Observation on the Proposed Muingmore Wind Farm

Case Reference: PAX16.324387

Applicant: RWE Renewables Ireland Limited

Development: Proposed construction of 13 wind turbines, a 110kV substation, Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and associated infrastructure in the townlands of Muingmore, Doolough, Tristia, Moneynierin and Bangor, County Mayo.

Dear Sir/Madam,

We wish to make an observation on the proposed Muingmore Wind Farm and ask An Coimisiún Pleanála to refuse permission.

We own our family home in Doolough. Our house is approximately one kilometre from the proposed development and is particularly close to turbine T1. We brought up our family here and our grandchildren come to stay with us regularly. This is where our family comes home to.

This area is not empty space. People live here. Families have built homes here and spent their lives looking after them. The fact that this development is described as renewable energy does not make this the right place for it.

The proposal includes 13 turbines, a 110kV substation, a battery energy storage system and associated infrastructure.

Noise

One of our greatest concerns is turbine noise. Doolough is a quiet rural area, particularly at night. Noise that might be described as acceptable on a calculation could be very noticeable in a place where there is little background noise.

We are concerned about the continuous turning of the blades, the swishing or thumping sound, low frequency noise and amplitude modulation. This would not be an occasional disturbance. It could affect us whenever the turbines are operating, including during the night.

The applicant's noise chapter accepts that amplitude modulation cannot be predicted before the wind farm is operating. It proposes dealing with this through a complaint and monitoring process afterwards. We do not believe local people should have to wait until the turbines are built, lose sleep and then make complaints before the real impact is known.

The noise assessment also confirms that operational noise will come not only from the turbines but from the substation and BESS equipment.

A turbine does not have to be inside our garden to change the enjoyment of our home. At approximately one kilometre from T1, we are seriously concerned that turbine noise will be too loud and will affect our peace, sleep and quality of life.

The final turbine model has not even been selected. We do not accept that permission should be granted first, with important noise controls and operating modes agreed later.

Shadow flicker

We are also very concerned about shadow flicker from T1 and the other turbines. At certain times of the year, the moving blades could cause repeated flashing through windows and across the house and garden.

This would be particularly upsetting when our grandchildren are visiting. Our home should remain a comfortable and peaceful place for them, not somewhere where blinds have to be closed or rooms avoided because of moving shadows.

The applicant's own assessment predicts that, before mitigation, up to 49 houses could experience more than 30 minutes of shadow flicker in a day under the worstcase turbine scenario. It also predicts that eight houses could experience more than 30 hours in a year even after average sunshine conditions are considered.

The proposed answer is to install control systems and shut turbines down at certain times. That does not remove our concern. These systems would need to work correctly

for the full life of the development. They would also be controlled and monitored by the developer after permission had already been granted.

Our property should receive a clear, house-specific assessment showing the expected impact from T1 and every other turbine that could cause shadow flicker. This should not be left to complaints after construction.

Peatland and carbon

The proposed site covers approximately 454 hectares and is described by the applicant as consisting mainly of cutover lowland blanket bog, forestry and worked and unworked peatland. The turbines could reach up to 180 metres in height.

Blanket bog is an Annex I habitat under the EU Habitats Directive, with active blanket bog recognised as a priority habitat.

Peatlands hold carbon, support wildlife and help control water. The NPWS states that intact bogs remove carbon dioxide from the air, store it over long periods and help to hold and slowly release water.

We are concerned about the amount of excavation, drainage and disturbance required for turbine foundations, crane hardstandings, access roads, cables, the substation and the BESS compound. Once peat is drained, cut apart or compacted, the damage cannot simply be undone by spreading vegetation over it afterwards.

It does not make sense to damage a natural carbon store and then describe the development only in terms of carbon savings.

Doolough Stream and Blacksod Bay

The Doolough Stream is part of this landscape and must be properly protected. The applicant's Water Framework Directive assessment identifies Doolough Stream as being within the wind farm site, with poor ecological status and an "At Risk" classification.

The streams from the site ultimately flow towards Blacksod Bay. The applicant acknowledges hydrological connections with the Mullet/Blacksod Bay Complex SAC and the Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA.

We are concerned about peat sediment, dirty water, concrete, oils, fuels and other pollution entering the stream during construction. We are also concerned about polluted water or firefighting water from an accident at the BESS compound reaching local drains and watercourses.

Doolough Stream is already under pressure. It should not be exposed to further risk from a development of this size.

Promises about silt fences, drainage channels and monitoring do not guarantee that pollution will not happen. The consequences of a failure could travel beyond the site and into protected waters.

Wildlife

One of the reasons we enjoy living here is the wildlife around us. We see birds and bats around our home and along the roads in the evenings. The bog, fields, streams and coastline are all connected.

We are concerned about the loss and fragmentation of habitat for birds, bats and other wildlife. We are also concerned about otters using local streams and wet areas. Construction noise, lighting, traffic, drainage works and the movement of turbine blades would change the area permanently.

Wildlife does not remain within lines drawn on a planning map. Birds and bats travel between feeding, resting and breeding areas. Otters move along watercourses. Damage to one part of the landscape can affect the wider area.

Dark skies

Doolough still has genuinely dark skies. On clear nights we can see the stars, and this is an important part of living in the countryside.

Turbines of up to 180 metres, fitted with aviation lighting, would introduce red lights high above the landscape. The BESS and substation would add further lighting at ground level.

This would change the night-time character of the area for local residents and could also disturb bats, birds and other nocturnal wildlife. Darkness is part of the natural environment and should not be treated as though it has no value.

Views and landscape

The open views across Doolough and towards the beach, bogs, hills and coast are part of what makes this area special. We have looked at these views for many years. They are part of our home and part of our family's connection to the area.

Thirteen turbines of this height would dominate the landscape. Because the land is low and open, they would be difficult to screen or hide. T1 would be particularly close and prominent from our part of Doolough.

These turbines would not look like small features in the distance. They would be major industrial structures with moving blades and lighting, visible during the day and at night.

Our property and our children's future

We have worked hard for our home and are very concerned about the effect this development could have on its value and saleability. A house beside large turbines, affected by noise, shadow flicker and aviation lighting, may not be as attractive to future buyers.

We are also concerned about what this could mean for our children. They may wish to return to Doolough and apply for planning permission on family land in the future. We do not want future planning applications restricted or refused because a developer has placed turbines close to our property and created new noise or shadow-flicker constraints.

Local families should not lose future opportunities to live on their own land because this wind farm was permitted first.

BESS and substation

The BESS and 110kV substation would add a separate industrial development to this rural area. We are concerned about noise from transformers, inverters and cooling equipment, as well as lighting, fencing, fire risk, toxic smoke and contaminated water in the event of an accident.

This is a remote rural area with narrow roads. Serious questions remain about emergency access, firefighting water, containment of polluted runoff and how local residents would be protected during a battery fire or other emergency.

These matters must be fully resolved before any decision is made. They should not be left to plans or agreements prepared after permission has been granted.

School bus and road safety

I used to be a school bus driver and I collected children every day on these local roads especially the Muingmore road and the Mount Jubilee Road. I know how narrow they are and how difficult it can already be for two vehicles to pass safely.

I cannot understand how normal school bus services are expected to operate alongside the number of heavy construction vehicles needed for this development. The school bus has to stop at different houses to collect and leave children. Temporary traffic lights, road closures, convoys and long delays could leave the bus sitting on narrow roads with children on board.

Many parts of these roads have weak edges, poor surfaces and very limited places to pull in. In my opinion, the roads are not capable of safely carrying school children on buses, local traffic and repeated heavy construction traffic at the same time.

This is not only about inconvenience. It is about the safety of schoolchildren. A clear and realistic plan is needed showing how school buses will be protected, how children will be collected safely and how long delays and dangerous meeting points will be avoided. These matters should not be left to be agreed after planning permission is granted.

Conclusion

This development would affect our home, our family and the life we have built in Doolough. We would be living close to T1 and within a wider industrial development containing thirteen turbines, a substation, a BESS compound, roads, hardstandings, cables and lighting.

We are not satisfied that our home would be protected from noise and shadow flicker. We are not satisfied that the peatland, Doolough Stream, Blacksod Bay, wildlife, dark skies or landscape can be adequately protected.

Monitoring and complaints after construction would be too late. Once the bog is excavated, the roads are built and the turbines are standing, the character of this area will already have been changed.

Doolough is our home, our children's home place and somewhere our grandchildren love to visit.

For these reasons, we respectfully ask An Coimisiún Pleanála to refuse permission for the proposed Muingmore Wind Farm.

Yours faithfully,

Margaret & Sean Bilbow .