

Orla Bakeberg

FORMAL OBSERVATION — AN COIMISIÚN PLEANÁLA

Case Reference: PAX16.324387

Proposed Development: Muingmore Wind Farm : 13 Wind Turbines, 180m Tip Height, County Mayo

Applicant: RWE Renewables Ireland Limited

Observer: Orla Bakeberg, Resident and Co-Founder, An Even Better Place to Work Ltd

Address: Geesala, Co. Mayo

Submission Deadline: 7 August 2026

Date: 7 August 2026

A Personal Observation

A Chara,

I am writing this observation as a resident of Geesala, as a woman who chose to make her home here and as someone who cares deeply about what happens to this place, as well as the people in it. I am aware that other, more technical submissions are being made. This one is personal.

Why I came here

In 2022, my husband Brian and I left Dalkey, County Dublin and moved to Geesala. I had grown up in south Dublin and spent a lot of my adult life there too. I knew what I was leaving and I knew what I was looking for. I wanted a quieter life, not a lesser one. I wanted to be somewhere that felt real, connected and unhurried. I wanted a community, rather than a crowd.

I found all of those things in Geesala. I found neighbours who know each other's names. I found a school next to our home, that sits at the heart of the community it serves. I found a landscape that restores you just by being in it. I found the kind of life I had been trying to describe for years, without quite knowing what it looked like.

I also threw myself into the community here. As President of Network Ireland Mayo, I work with women across Mayo who are building businesses, often in difficult circumstances, often in places the rest of Ireland overlooks. The energy and resilience of those women and the landscape they are doing it in, is something I find genuinely inspiring. This place matters to me professionally, as well as personally.

Our home and the school next door

Our home looks out toward the proposed turbine site. The school that serves this community is adjacent to where we live. I think about both of these things when I read the applicant's assessment of *residential amenity and sensitive receptors*.

The applicant's own shadow flicker assessment confirms that *38 properties exceed the annual threshold before mitigation is applied and that 8 properties remain in exceedance even after mitigation*. Our home is in the area directly affected. The shadow flicker model assigns identical, templated window dimensions to every property it assessed, yet no individual survey of any property was carried out. That means the model has no idea what our windows actually look like, how they are positioned, or how shadow flicker would actually affect **our home**. The assurance of "near zero" impact is built on data that was never collected.

Geesala National School is approximately 1,650 metres from the nearest turbine. Yet, the applicant's Chapter 4 does not identify it. Schools are among the most sensitive receptors in any planning assessment – the children spend their days there, often outdoors, in the very landscape this development would transform. The omission of the school from the applicant's receptor assessment is not a technicality – **it is a failure to properly assess a place that matters enormously to this community**.

What this development would do to our life here

I spend a great deal of time in our garden. It is one of the things I came here for – the space, the quiet, the connection to the outdoors, that simply is not available in the same way in a Dublin suburb. Noise from 13 turbines at 180 metres, operating 24 hours a day, in a landscape this quiet, would not be a minor background hum. It would be a permanent feature of our outdoor life, in a way it would not be in a louder environment.

I also think about what this development would do to our home's value. My husband Brian and I, invested significantly into this property. We made that investment in good faith, in a community and a landscape we trusted would be protected. A 35-year industrial installation visible from our front door and audible from our garden, is not what we purchased and it is not what this planning system should be permitting.

More than the financial dimension, I think about what it would do to how I feel about being here. I do not use the word "anxiety" lightly but the prospect of living beside an industrial installation of this scale, with aviation warning lights flashing through our bedroom window every night for decades, genuinely concerns me. That is not a planning abstraction. It is a real impact on a real person's life.

Formal request

I formally request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse permission for the proposed Muingmore Wind Farm. I ask the Board to consider what this development would mean, not just in technical planning terms but in the lived experience of the people who made their homes here, because they believed this landscape would be protected.

Mise le meas,

Orla Bakeberg

Geesala, Co. Mayo

President, Network Ireland Mayo

orla@ripple-effect.ie