

Objection to Muingmore Wind Farm from Orla O’Kane. Geesala, Ballina, Co Mayo. F26 V5T3

I wish to make an objection to the proposed Muingmore Wind Farm. **Case Reference PAX16.324387**. The proposed site is close to my house in Geesala. In support of this objection please consider the following:

1.The proposed location for this wind farm is effectively on ‘The Wild Atlantic Way’ and will interrupt the visibility of visitors to the area who wish to enjoy this area of outstanding natural beauty and enjoy views of the coastline. It would seem to contradict the concept of wild Atlantic proximity and Atlantic vistas if a large infrastructure project dominates the landscape. What is the point of promoting and encouraging visitors to the area and then hindering and obscuring the views that they have come to enjoy.

2.Tourism is an important economic contributor to Co.Mayo bringing much needed spending and generating employment in the county. South Mayo draws visitors with a well-developed hospitality and entertainment offering while North Mayo offers archaeological areas of interest, a rugged landscape and a sense of ‘getting away from it all’. This unique offering will be impaired by the proposed wind farm which in turn will impact the numbers of visitors to the area.

3. We are very fortunate to have Ireland’s first international Dark Sky Park in close proximity to us in Geesala. The park promotes itself as “*showcasing some of the darkest most pristine skies in the world*” with an “*unspoilt Atlantic coastline*”. This unique amenity could be here because the area has, to date, been a quiet, low-density, low-rise area without major national infrastructure, large towns or motorways. Putting a wind farm with its associated tall wind turbines into this area completely contradicts these concepts and will detract from the spirit of the ‘Dark Sky Park’.

4. North Mayo has suffered from significant population depletion in recent decades, and we have been hearing for years about efforts to provide housing and opportunities that will encourage young families to stay in the area. The proposed wind farm will impact the value of existing properties and the opportunities for planning permission for families seeking to stay and build homes. It seems illogical that on the one hand we are encouraging people to make their future in this rural location while on the other hand penalising them for doing so.

5. The viability of rural Ireland depends on people wanting to live here. They do so for various reasons, among them the desire for peace and quiet. Wind turbines cause noise and create wind flicker which has a material impact on the resident’s quality of life. We know this from the experiences of other communities who live close to turbines. These effects will act as a deterrent to people wanting to live in our area. To build a wind farm in this rural location is effectively destroying the reasons people will want to live here. This in turn will impact the economic viability of businesses in this part of north Mayo.

6. I support Ireland’s need to embrace sustainable energy generation and to move away from fossil fuels. I understand that the State is under pressure to find opportunities to generate renewable power sources to feed the energy needs of the future. We already have a wind farm in Bunnahowen so North Mayo is playing its part in this move to renewable energy. However, I believe the location of this proposed wind farm in Muingmore is ill-considered for the reasons stated above.

Orla O’Kane