



ORLA PHOTOGRAPHY

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7th August 2026

An Coimisiún Pleanála

64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 V902

Case Reference: PAX16.324387

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

Applicant: RWE Renewables Ireland Limited

A Chara,

I submit this observation as a professional landscape photographer based in Geesala, County Mayo and as the owner and sole operator of Orla Photography. The landscape of Erris and in particular, the coastline, the light, the bog, the sky above Blacksod Ba, and the structures that mark this place, is not a backdrop to my work. **It is the work.** I am asking An Coimisiún Pleanála to understand what this development would mean for a business built entirely on the landscape it proposes to alter with this proposed Wind Farm.

Orla Photography

Orla Photography is a landscape photography business operating from Geesala, County Mayo. My portfolio includes the series Mayo My Home, Sunsets, Lighthouses, Waterways and Moods & Moments. All centred on the landscape of north Mayo and the Atlantic coast. I sell prints, postcards, calendars and books, locally, regionally and globally. Both my 2025 and 2026 calendars features images of this very coastline. My postcard range features this landscape. Every piece of work I produce and sell is, in a real commercial sense, made from what this place looks like.

I also offer creative writing courses and operate a shop selling my images directly to collectors, visitors to the area and people with connections to this part of Ireland right here in Geesala. Including the Irish diaspora worldwide, who purchase my work because it shows them a place they love or come from. My business exists because this landscape is extraordinary. That is not sentiment – it is the commercial foundation on which Orla Photography is built.

What this development would do to my work

Photography is, at its most fundamental level, about what is in front of the camera. The landscape I have spent years photographing – such as the open bog running to the sea, the unbroken horizon from Blacksod Point, the lighthouses, the waterways and the particular quality of light that makes this part of Ireland unlike anywhere else, would be permanently changed by the installation of 13 turbines at 180 metres tip height within the field of view of locations I use regularly.

This is not an abstract concern about aesthetics. It is a direct commercial impact on my inventory. The images I can sell to the Irish diaspora, to visitors, to collectors – images that celebrate this landscape as something extraordinary and unspoiled – are harder to make and harder to sell, when the horizon includes large industrial structures. The postcard of Blacksod Bay with turbines on the skyline, is a different product from the postcard without them. The 2027 calendar with the wind farm visible in the background is a very different commercial proposition from the one I would currently produce.

The mandatory aviation warning lights required on turbines of this height would also permanently alter night photography in this area. The dark skies above Geesala and the surrounding coast are among the finest in Ireland. I have produced work capturing the night sky, the stars and the Milky Way above this landscape. Those images depend on the absence of artificial light sources at horizon level. Mandatory turbine aviation lighting, flashing continuously throughout the night, would end that body of work.

My business has not been assessed

The applicant's Chapter 4 (Population and Human Health) and its tourism and economic impact sections, do not identify Orla Photography as a business affected by this development. I am a professional photographer, operating a commercial creative enterprise from the landscape the applicant proposes to industrialise. My livelihood depends directly on the character of that landscape. The failure to identify landscape photography businesses operating in the affected area as sensitive economic receptors, is a gap in the applicant's assessment.

Photography businesses are a recognised component of tourism and creative enterprise ecosystems in rural Ireland. The Wild Atlantic Way has generated significant commercial activity for landscape photographers working along its route. My business is part of that ecosystem. The applicant has not assessed the impact of this development on that economic activity.

The light, the horizon and what cannot be recovered

I want to say something plainly that a planning submission does not usually say. I moved to Geesala because of what I saw when I arrived here. The light in north Mayo – the way it comes off the Atlantic, the way it moves across the bog, the particular gold of an Erris sunset – is unlike anything I had encountered in thirty years of photography. I have been trying to capture it ever since.

That light, falling on a landscape with 13 turbines at 180 metres on the horizon, is still beautiful. However, it is a very different view. The image changes. The story the photograph tells changes. The place the image asks the viewer to want to be, changes. For a photographer, that is not a small loss. It is the loss of a subject and for me, an income-generating one as it is today, without a Wind Farm.

I formally request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse permission for the proposed Muingmore Wind Farm. I ask the Board to recognise that the commercial creative and tourism enterprises operating in this landscape, are real economic actors with real interests in its integrity and that those interests have not been adequately assessed in this application.

Mise le meas,

Orla Bakeberg

Orla Photography, Geesala, Co. Mayo, www.orlaphotography.ie