

Patrick Sweeney

Geesala

Co.Mayo

Date : 04/08/2026

The Inspector
An Coimisiún Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 V902

Re: Proposed Muingmore Wind Farm Development
Planning Reference: PAX16.324387 (An Coimisiún Pleanála Ref. 324387)

Concerns about local wildlife:

This proposed development area is home to a variety of protected birds . Winter and summer birds that are linked to Blacksod Bay /Broadhaven Bay such as lower light bellied goose, red throated diver, Dunlin, long ear owl , Whooper swan, Cuckoo ,Barnacle goose, Golden plover, snipe ,kestrel,Mallard,Teal,Wigeon,Woodcock,Sparrowhawk,Common Raven, redwing and many more that are protected in Irish and European law . We also have pairs of otters in all the water ways including Doolough mhuing and Tristia streams and lakes in the wind farm area that feed on frog, eels and small fish . The common lizard is active in all our peatland bogs . The pine martin, bats are known to be in the forests where the proposed site for the turbines is.

A report from NPWS in Killarney national park in Kerry reported that the main risk to white tailed eagles after poisoning was wind turbine strikes . In Sliabh Beagh in Co Fermanagh, four curlew chicks were rescued from wildfires by a cross border conservation group . This emphasises the importance of protecting the nesting areas of the Curlew and other red listed birds. The impact that the proposed wind farm will have on our red listed birds and wildlife in our locality would be detrimental with the destruction of habitats during the construction phase and also the permanency of the Turbines themselves. The combined impact on wildlife, feeding areas, nesting grounds and movement between these habitats should be considered before any decision is made

Visual Impact:

The visual impact of the turbines on the local area will be unfavourable. At 180 metres tall the Turbines will be visible from Achill ,Blacksod lighthouse, Elly bay, Belmullet and across the peninsula . This will have a negetive effect on the Wild Atlantic Way that promotes tourism and local employment .

Peatland and Waterways:

The area where the proposed wind farm development is hoping to locate is home to deep blanket bog, forestry and waterways and lakes. It has been untouched for over 40 years. This peatland area has regenerated. The European protected bog habitat annex I habitat 7130 is a priority European blanket bog directive. This peatland is highly sensitive and once damaged it takes years to restore. There needs to be a proper assessment on peat stability, peat slippage, excavation, carbon loss, water pollution, silt run off into Doolough, Mhuing and Tristra streams and Lakes into Blacksod protected Bay and Tullaghan bay. The coastline is rich in seaweed that is used in all health benefits. We have two kelp farms located in Blacksod Bay. One just out from Doolough Beach: 'Dúlra' and 'Alga seaweed'. The tidal stream between Doolough and Dooyork beach is home to seatrout, seabass, sandeels, plaice, Dab, cockles and muscles. All of which will be affected if these streams become polluted with run off from excavation. Any pollution entering these streams could travel onwards into Blacksod Bay and affect the wider protected marine environment.

Tourism:

Tourism in our area is very important to local community. The hotel, guest houses, holiday homes, pubs that employ local people from tourism cannot be underestimated. The impact of wind turbines with a height of 180 m high that will generate noise and shadow flicker and have a visual impact on our landscape will destroy our local tourism. The distance from the nearest turbine to the Erris Coast hotel and Geesala Community Centre is 1696m, 1116m from the turbines to the coastline, 2423m to Doolough beach, 2384 m to Dooyork Beach and 2388m to Shraigh beach. I would like to highlight that the distances provided in RWE's application are inaccurate. They failed to mention that Geesala school is 1650 m from Turbine 10. Turbine 1 is 2903m to Shraigh school. We also have a boxing club, a rowing club, Doohoma golf club and Doolough beach that host dog and horse racing on the beach that attracts huge numbers of visitors to the area annually.

Erris was voted 'The Best Place To Go Wild' in 2014 nationally for the balance of nature, wilderness, beauty, activities and accessibility launching Erris into the spotlight as a fantastic tourist destination. The natural landscape is one of the main reasons people visit Erris, and once this is changed it cannot easily be restored.

New Mayo county Council Development Plan: On July 13th 2026 Mayo County Council formally adopted the renewable Energy strategy for County Mayo. This is now the operative Planning Policy for County Mayo. This Policy outlines that the Muingmore site proposed for RWE's Wind farm is deemed unsuitable for Wind Energy Development. In RWE's own planning application document EIAR, Chapter 10, they admit in their own words 'It should be noted that the site and indeed the predominance of County Mayo is now located within an area deemed 'unsuitable' for wind energy development'. These are the words of RWE themselves, consolidated by their own lawyers and consultants. This Windfarm proposal is contrary to this strategy and therefore materially contravenes the plan and is contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

No Application for Grid Connection and Design for Battery Storage facility:

RWE have stated that they will put in a planning application for Grid Connection and a design for battery storage facility at a later date. I find this worrying as I am concerned that the planning application does not provide sufficient information about how the electricity generated by the proposed Muingmore Windfarm will be connected to the National Grid. Without a clearly defined Grid Connection Strategy it is difficult to assess the full environmental, visual, ecological and community impacts of the overall development of this windfarm.

In addition, the BESS is anticipated as part of the project's operation, but it is not part of this planning application. Size, safety measures, location, design, noise characteristics, traffic implications, fire protection measures and environmental effects should be assessed as part of the planning process. The absence of these details limits the ability of the public to fully evaluate the cumulative impacts of the development. These parts of the project should not be left until after planning permission, as they are necessary to understand the full impact of the development

Local Infrastructure: The roads in our locality are narrow rural roads (Also take note that these roads are the gateway to the Wild Atlantic Way). This wind farm will require thousands of HGV movements during construction including deliveries of stone, concrete, steel and turbine components. A cumulative effect over two years can place sustained pressure on our narrow local roads. These roads are constructed over peat and soft ground and are not designed to carry repeated heavy, abnormal loads. Continuous use by HGV's can lead to subsidence, cracking, edge collapse and damage to bridges.

These truck movements on rural roads will present risks for pedestrians, cyclists, emergency services, agricultural vehicles, school buses and motorists who use these roads on a daily basis. Overtime damage can occur to the drainage and bog stability. There should be a full survey of the roads and bridges before any work begins, together with a clear plan for repairing any damage caused.

Dark Skies: Aviation warning lights on modern wind turbines pose a major threat to the Gold-Tier designation of the Mayo International Dark Sky Park at Wild Nephin National Parks Ballycroy, located around 5km as the crow flies from the proposed Windfarm. The light pollution impacts on aquatic, Marine and Coastal Ecosystems. The light pollution from the aviation lighting hinders stargazers significantly, who travel to our locality specifically for Dark skies, from finding constellations and glimpses of planets. The flashing aviation lights would be visible every night and would permanently change the dark rural character of the area

Noise and Shadow Flicker:

The proposed Wind Farm with proposed Turbines of 180 metres tall will pose a threat of noise pollution and shadow flicker to the homes between 720m and above from the nearest turbine. The health impacts of shadow flicker and noise pollution both mentally and physically are seriously worrying. The Gilbert Hill Windfarm in Bunclody Co. Wexford with Turbines at a height of 120 metres had to shut down three turbines permanently last year because of Wind

turbine noise adversely affecting local resident's health. The High Court Judge ordered a full shut down of these three turbines as the evidence proved in court that these turbines were a complete 'Nuisance' to the local residents. In RWE's Windfarm proposal for Muingmore/Geesala we have turbines 60 metres taller than Bunclody Turbines and houses 280 metres closer than the Bunclody residents. This is surely going to cause a health issue. Please consider these points very carefully in your evaluation. We have a lot of young families living in close proximity to the proposed windfarm who located here for the purpose of a good quality of life in the countryside, not adverse health effects!

In Conclusion: After reading RWE's application in detail, I find it frustrating that the surveys that RWE refer to on Human Health and Population are outdated. The surveys referred to in the application are based on Wind turbines that are considerably smaller than the proposed monstrous 180 metre structures.

RWE's application states that they engaged positively with the local community. I am a Postman in the local area of Geesala meeting the locals on a daily basis and I can assure you that the majority of the community did not know anything whatsoever about a proposed Windfarm let alone engage with anybody from RWE.

I would like you to consider that three houses were omitted on the map Figure 4-3. These three houses are located inside 800 metres to the nearest turbine. This is proving that this application is not as transparent as it should be.

Precedent for refusal for a similar proposal-I refer also to a previous refusal by Mayo County Council and An Bord Pleanála for a Wind Farm proposal TAWNANASOLL/CROAGHAUN/TULLAGHAUNNASHAMMER, Bangor Erris, Co. Mayo Reference Number-PL16.245355. There are many similar characteristics to the landscape sensitivities which resulted in that application being refused applicable under the current application. Environmental sensitivities and impacts on local population are arguably greater under the current application. The precedent established to refuse permission under that application should equally apply under this proposed development.

I back renewable energy and see the need for it but our local area of Geesala/Muingmore is unsuitable for a Windfarm for all the reasons I have mentioned above. Huge amounts of funding has gone into a feasibility study for Wave Energy outside Erris Head. SEAI has spent millions on developing this project. This project remains an important part of Ireland's renewable energy strategy for Wave energy and floating off shore wind demonstration. In my opinion I think more wave energy projects should be pursued instead of destroying our landscape, tourism, ecosystems and communities with monstrous Wind turbines that have so many adverse affects to a small community like our own.

For all of the reasons outlined above, I respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse permission for the proposed Muingmore Wind Farm.

Yours faithfully,

Patrick Sweeney .