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Bangor Erris
Ballina
Co. Mayo

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An Coimisiún Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 V902

Re: Proposed Muingmore Wind Farm
Case Reference: PAX16.324387

To An Coimisiún Pleanála,

I wish to make a formal observation on the proposed Muingmore Wind Farm.

I grew up in Mount Jubilee and I still have strong family and personal ties to the area. I now live in Bangor Erris, where I am raising my own family, but Mount Jubilee remains a large part of our daily lives.

I visit Mount Jubilee every day. My mother still lives there, and my children visit their granny regularly. They often stay overnight in her home. I also use the local roads each day, so I know the area, the houses, the road conditions and the surrounding landscape very well.

I strongly object to this development.

Impact on Mount Jubilee

Mount Jubilee is a small rural village with its own character, history and sense of place. The proposed turbines would change that character permanently.

These would be very large industrial structures. They would dominate views that local families have known all their lives. The scale of the turbines would be completely out of keeping with the village and the surrounding countryside.

The views around Mount Jubilee should be protected. They form part of the identity of the area. People live here because of the peace, the open landscape and the strong connection between homes, farmland, bog and coast.

Once turbines of this size are placed across the landscape, that change cannot be undone.

Shadow flicker

I am deeply concerned about shadow flicker at my mother's home.

My children visit her often and regularly stay overnight. Her home should remain a safe and comfortable place for them to spend time with their granny.

Shadow flicker would affect the use and enjoyment of the house. It could disturb people while they are resting, eating, watching television or spending time together. This is a serious concern for my family because this is a home we use every week, not a house we visit once or twice a year.

The application identifies significant levels of shadow flicker at my mother home, located near the proposed turbines. Families should not have to depend on future promises of mitigation after permission has been granted.

The impact should have been avoided.

Narrow roads and traffic safety

I use the roads through Mount Jubilee every day.

These roads are narrow. In places, there is little room for two vehicles to pass safely. There are bends, soft verges, roadside drains and limited visibility.

The proposed development would bring large numbers of construction vehicles, delivery trucks and abnormal loads through this rural road network. This would create delays and increase the risk to local drivers, school buses, walkers, cyclists and families travelling between homes.

People still need to get to work, school, medical appointments and local services during construction.

The road network was not built for this level or type of traffic. Temporary traffic controls and short-term road works will not remove the wider safety concern.

Peatland and water

The proposed site contains extensive peatland.

Peat is easily damaged when it is drained, excavated or crossed by heavy construction traffic. The development would require turbine foundations, roads, crane pads, drainage works, cabling and other infrastructure across this landscape.

This would cause permanent disturbance.

Peatlands store water and carbon. They also support wildlife and help control how water moves through the land. Damage to peat can affect nearby drains, streams and downstream water quality.

The Doolough Stream and connected watercourses flow towards the wider Blacksod Bay catchment. Blacksod Bay is one of the most important natural areas in Erris. It supports wildlife, fisheries, farming, tourism and local recreation.

Any pollution, peat sediment or change in water flow could travel beyond the immediate development site. The risk must be assessed across the full water system, from the construction area to Blacksod Bay.

The application does not give me confidence that these risks have been fully removed.

Protected peatland and habitats

The bogland around Muingmore and Mount Jubilee is not unused land. It contains peat habitats, wildlife, drainage systems and areas with strong ecological value. Parts of the wider landscape are linked to protected sites and sensitive habitats.

Large areas would be altered by roads, excavation, turbine bases and drainage works. Even where the land has been cut or disturbed in the past, it can still support peat-forming vegetation and wildlife.

The damage would extend beyond the exact footprint of each turbine. Drainage and excavation can affect surrounding peat, water movement and habitat condition.

The full long-term loss of peatland has not been treated with enough seriousness.

Blacksod Bay

Blacksod Bay is central to the identity of Erris. It supports birds, marine life, fishing, tourism and local employment. It is also part of the landscape that makes this area distinct.

The bay must be protected from indirect impacts from development further inland. Water does not stop at the edge of the wind farm site. Sediment, pollution and changes in drainage can move through streams and connected watercourses.

A development of this scale should not be permitted where uncertainty remains about downstream effects on such an important area.

Dark skies

Erris is known for its dark skies. The proposed turbines would require aviation lighting. Red warning lights on structures close to 180 metres high would be visible across a wide area, particularly at night.

This would change the night-time landscape around Mount Jubilee, Bangor Erris and the wider Erris region.

Dark skies are important to residents, wildlife and visitors. They are also part of the appeal of rural Erris. People should not have to accept permanent industrial lighting across an area that is currently dark and quiet.

Overall impact on Erris

This proposal must be considered as part of the wider impact of wind energy development across Erris.

The area already carries a large amount of energy infrastructure. Local communities should not be expected to accept one major development after another without proper regard for the combined effects on homes, roads, landscape, peatland, water and quality of life.

The turbines would affect more than the immediate landholding. They would be visible from homes, roads and villages across a large area.

The impact would be permanent.

My family has deep roots in Mount Jubilee. My mother, sister and brothers all live in Mount Jubilee. My children spend time there every week. I use the roads every day and I know the landscape well.

I do not accept that this development can be built without causing serious harm to the village, the surrounding peatland, the dark skies, local roads and the wider character of Erris.

I ask An Coimisiún Pleanála to refuse permission for the proposed Muingmore Wind Farm.

Yours faithfully,

Sandra Brogan