

Sean Munnelly

Muingmore
Bunnahowen
Ballina
Co. Mayo

1 August 2026

To:

An Coimisiún Pleanála

Re: Formal Observation / Objection to Proposed Muingmore Wind Farm – Case Reference PAX16.324387

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to make a formal observation and objection regarding the proposed Muingmore Wind Farm (Case Reference PAX16.324387). I respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse permission for this development or, at the very least, ensure that all environmental, ecological, heritage and community concerns are fully and independently assessed before any decision is made.

My name is Sean Munnelly, a resident of Muingmore, Bunnahowen, Ballina, Co. Mayo, where my wife, Sabina, and I built our family home in 2025. We have invested our lives in this community, and I farm the surrounding lands. Our livelihood, our family's future and our quality of life are directly connected to the landscape, environment and natural heritage of this area. As someone who lives and farms here every day, I have a deep appreciation for the unique character of Erris and a genuine concern for preserving it for future generations. When Sabina and I sought planning permission to build our family home in 2024, we were informed by the relevant planning authority that they had serious concerns in relation to the proposed house design, on the basis that it did not embrace the principles as set out in the Mayo Rural Housing Design Guidelines 2008. It was said that the proposed house design would fail to integrate successfully into this designated coastal landscape, would seriously injure the amenities of the area and would be contrary to the provisions of Mayo County Development Plan 2022 -2028. The local authority also states that the proposed design by virtue of its porch design, fenestration, scale, massing and prominence, if permitted, would constitute an incongruous design feature that would be out of character with the coastal landscape which was necessary to protect. We were advised at that point to submit revised drawings that would incorporate the principles set out in the Mayo Rural House Design Guidelines 2008. The point I am trying to make then is, how can a porch on a residential dwelling measuring 4240mm be more damaging to the local area than the proposed 13 180m wind turbines

The proposed development represents a significant industrialisation of an important rural landscape. The proposal extends far beyond the installation of wind turbines. It includes thirteen turbines of approximately 180 metres in height, a 110kV substation, a large Battery

Energy Storage System (BESS), new access roads, hardstands, underground cabling, drainage works, construction compounds and associated infrastructure. Collectively, these elements would permanently alter the character of the surrounding landscape, diminish the tranquillity and dark skies of the area and add to the cumulative burden of energy infrastructure already present throughout North Mayo.

I am particularly concerned about the potential impacts on internationally and nationally protected habitats and species. The proposed development is situated within a landscape closely connected to important protected sites, including Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA, the Mullet/Blacksod Bay Complex SAC, Bellacorick Bog Complex SAC, the Owenduff/Nephin Complex SAC and SPA, together with nearby National Heritage Areas such as Tristia Bog and Tullaghan Bay and Bog. These protected areas support internationally important bird populations, sensitive peatland habitats and diverse wildlife that should not be placed at risk through drainage changes, peat disturbance, sediment runoff, pollution or increased human activity.

The site contains extensive peatland, which is environmentally valuable and highly sensitive. Peatlands are irreplaceable carbon stores that support important habitats including blanket bog and wet heath. Excavation, drainage and construction activities could destabilise peat, increase the risk of erosion and peat slides, alter natural hydrology and reduce water quality in local streams and downstream catchments. Given the high rainfall experienced in this Atlantic region, these risks require particularly careful consideration.

The planning documentation identifies a number of protected bird species using the wider area, including species associated with nearby Special Protection Areas. I am concerned that the proposal may increase collision risks, disturb breeding and feeding grounds, alter established flight paths and contribute to cumulative impacts alongside existing and proposed wind energy developments within the region.

I also have concerns regarding the proposed Battery Energy Storage System. A development of this scale introduces additional issues relating to fire safety, emergency response, potential pollution arising from firefighting water, operational noise, lighting and the further industrialisation of an otherwise peaceful rural landscape. These matters warrant the highest level of scrutiny.

The proposal also raises significant concerns regarding traffic and road safety during construction. Local roads are heavily used by residents, school transport, agricultural machinery, pedestrians and cyclists. The movement of abnormal loads, heavy goods vehicles and construction traffic would create disruption for local communities and could pose unacceptable safety risks. As a local farmer, I rely daily on these roads for agricultural operations and am particularly concerned about the impact this increased traffic would have on farming activities and public safety.

In addition, I believe the proposal has the potential to adversely affect the area's archaeological heritage and cultural landscape. Peatlands frequently preserve important

archaeological material, while the wider area contains recorded monuments and sites of cultural significance that form an integral part of the identity and history of Erris.

Finally, I am deeply concerned about the overall impact this development would have on the landscape, tourism, local amenity and quality of life. The open bogland, natural scenery, wildlife and peaceful character of Erris are among its greatest assets. They are also the reasons why my wife and I chose to build our family home here and continue to farm in this community. The introduction of very large turbines together with extensive associated infrastructure would fundamentally and permanently alter this landscape for current residents and future generations.

Finally, I note that Mayo County Council formally adopted the Renewable Energy Strategy for County Mayo as Variation No. 2 to the County Development Plan 2022 – 2028 on 13 July 2026, during the observation period for this application. The applicants own EIAR (Chapter 10) admits that the site is located within an area deemed to be “Unsuitable” for wind energy development under the new strategy. This development then is in material contravention of the current County Development Plan. I understand that under Section 37(2)(b) of the Planning and Development Act, An Coimisiun Pleanála cannot grant permission for development in material contravention of a development plan without specific justification. I further understand that no such justification has been provided.

For all of these reasons, I respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála gives full and careful consideration to the environmental, ecological, archaeological, landscape and community impacts of this proposal. In my opinion, the risks associated with this development have not been adequately addressed, and I therefore respectfully request that planning permission be refused.

Thank you for considering my observation.

Yours faithfully,

Sean Munnelly