

Sinead Sweeney

Doolough,

Geesala,

Ballina,

County Mayo,

F26 N7P6.

The Secretary,
An Coimisiún Pleanála,
64 Marlborough Street,
Dublin 1,
D01 V902

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to formally object to the proposed wind farm development at Muingmore and Doolough, Co. Mayo.

I fully support Ireland's transition to renewable energy and recognise the important role that wind energy plays in achieving our climate goals. However, renewable energy developments must be located in appropriate areas and must strike a balance between climate action, environmental protection and the wellbeing of local communities. I believe this proposal fails to achieve that balance, and for the reasons outlined below, I respectfully request that planning permission be refused.

1. Material Contravention of the County Development Plan

Mayo County Council adopted the Renewable Energy Strategy for County Mayo as Variation No. 2 to the County Development Plan 2022–2028 on 13 July 2026. As this variation now forms part of the statutory County Development Plan, it should be afforded significant weight in determining this application.

The applicant's own Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), Chapter 10, confirms that the proposed development is located within an area designated as "Unsuitable" for wind energy development under the adopted Renewable Energy Strategy.

This proposal therefore represents a material contravention of the current County Development Plan.

Under Section 37(2)(b) of the Planning and Development Act, An Coimisiún Pleanála may only grant permission for a development that materially contravenes a Development Plan where specific statutory justification exists. In my view, no compelling justification has been demonstrated that would outweigh the clear planning policy of Mayo County Council.

2. Conflict with the Vision of the County Development Plan

The proposed development is also inconsistent with the wider vision and objectives of the County Development Plan.

The Vision for County Mayo states that the county should support healthy communities, provide an attractive place in which to live, work and visit, while ensuring a transition to a low-carbon future that also protects the county's high environmental quality.

While I support renewable energy, I do not believe this proposal achieves the balance intended by the Development Plan. Instead, it proposes an industrial-scale development within an area that has already been identified by Mayo County Council as unsuitable for wind energy development.

The nearest homes are understood to be approximately 720 metres from the proposed turbines. Although this exceeds the minimum setback distance, the scale and height of the turbines would still have a significant impact on the surrounding landscape and on the amenity of nearby residents.

3. Landscape, Coastal Views and Visual Amenity

Before planning permission was granted for our family home, Mayo County Council recognised this area as one of significant natural beauty. The surrounding coastline, mountains, open countryside and Atlantic views are among the defining characteristics of this part of North Mayo.

My family home has a direct view of the proposed wind farm. If this development proceeds, the turbines would become a permanent and dominant feature of the landscape from my home.

The peaceful rural outlook that currently exists would be replaced by an industrial-scale energy development, fundamentally changing the character of the area.

I also regularly use Doolough Beach, which is one of the area's most treasured natural amenities. The beach is valued not only by local residents but also by the many visitors who come throughout the year to walk, swim, surf, fish and enjoy the spectacular scenery.

From the beach, the proposed turbines would be clearly visible on the skyline, permanently altering the natural coastal landscape and reducing the sense of openness, tranquillity and remoteness that makes this area so unique.

Doolough Beach is an important destination along the Wild Atlantic Way and contributes to the local tourism economy. I believe the introduction of an industrial-scale wind farm into this landscape would have a significant adverse impact on the scenic quality of the area and the experience of those who visit it.

4. Traffic and Road Safety

The construction of this development would require a significant increase in heavy goods vehicles transporting turbine components, cranes, construction materials and other machinery.

The local road network consists of narrow rural roads that were never designed to accommodate heavy industrial traffic of this nature.

These roads are used daily by local residents, farmers transporting livestock and agricultural machinery, school transport, cyclists and the large number of visitors travelling to Doolough Beach and the surrounding coastline.

The increase in construction traffic would create additional road safety risks, cause disruption to local communities and place considerable pressure on rural infrastructure. Given the popularity of Doolough Beach during the tourist season, these impacts would be particularly significant.

5. Residential Amenity

Although the proposed turbines comply with the minimum setback distance, their exceptional height and scale would have a substantial impact on nearby homes.

As my home has a direct view of the proposed development, I would experience the visual effects of these turbines every day. Their presence would permanently alter the landscape surrounding my home and diminish the peaceful rural environment in which my family lives.

I am also concerned about the potential effects of operational noise, shadow flicker and the cumulative impact of living beside an industrial-scale wind farm over its operational lifetime.

6. Biodiversity and Wildlife

The proposed development has the potential to adversely affect local wildlife and habitats during both the construction and operational phases.

Construction activities, including excavation, road improvements and increased traffic, would disturb the surrounding environment. Once operational, the turbines may also present risks to birds, bats and other protected species.

This landscape supports valuable biodiversity, and I believe every effort should be made to protect these habitats from unnecessary long-term impacts.

Conclusion

I respectfully submit that this proposal is fundamentally inconsistent with the current statutory planning policy for County Mayo.

The applicant's own Environmental Impact Assessment Report confirms that the proposed site lies within an area designated as "Unsuitable" for wind energy development under Mayo County Council's adopted Renewable Energy Strategy.

In addition, the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on the landscape, coastal scenery, visual amenity, residential amenity, biodiversity, tourism and the safe operation of the local rural road network.

While I fully support the development of renewable energy, I believe it should be located in areas identified as suitable and should not come at the expense of one of Mayo's most scenic and environmentally important coastal landscapes.

For all of these reasons, I respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuses planning permission for the proposed wind farm development.

Yours faithfully,

Sinéad Sweeney