

I have been visiting Brittas Bay since the 1990s, having first holidayed there as a child. It has remained an important place to me throughout my life, and I now holiday there with my spouse and our two young children for 3 months every Summer.

I wish to make this submission because I am very concerned about the proposed construction of a wind farm of this size on Arklow Bank which is a shallow, dynamic offshore sandbank situated close to popular beaches, sensitive dune systems, protected habitats and established coastal communities.

I am fully in favour of wind farms which form an important part of achieving national climate and energy targets. However, supporting offshore wind does not mean that every proposed location is suitable. My concern relates specifically to the scale and location of this development on Arklow Bank.

I do not feel that the report submitted by the Applicant provides sufficient certainty that the development will not negatively affect the structure of the sandbank, sediment transport, coastal erosion, neighbouring beaches, bathing-water quality, protected habitats or marine and bird life.

A considerable part of the Applicant's assessment depends upon computer-generated modelling and predicted outcomes. It has not been demonstrated clearly enough that these models can accurately represent the complex and continually changing conditions found on and around Arklow Bank. Conclusions that impacts will be negligible should not be accepted where they remain dependent upon uncertain assumptions or modelling limitations.

Should those predictions prove inaccurate, the resulting effects could be difficult or impossible to reverse. The consequences could extend beyond the immediate development area and affect coastal communities, tourism, recreation, wildlife, protected environments and the wider Wicklow and Wexford coastline.

European environmental law requires that permission for a project capable of affecting a protected European site must be supported by complete, precise and definitive scientific findings. The competent authority must be satisfied that no reasonable scientific doubt remains regarding the absence of adverse effects on the integrity of those sites. Where genuine uncertainty persists, the precautionary principle requires environmental protection to take priority over assumptions that impacts can be addressed through monitoring or mitigation at a later stage.

The need to meet climate targets is urgent, but that urgency should not result in permanent decisions being made without sufficiently robust evidence. Future generations will judge not only whether Ireland increased its renewable-energy capacity, but also whether it did so responsibly and without sacrificing irreplaceable natural environments.

Arklow Bank and the adjoining coastline are natural assets that cannot simply be restored if serious or unexpected damage occurs. Renewable-energy development should proceed in locations where environmental risks have been thoroughly examined and where adverse effects can be ruled out with the level of certainty required by law.

I therefore respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse permission for the proposed development in its current location. It should be located at least 20km from the shoreline where the chances of environmental risk have been visiting Brittas Bay since the 1990s, having first holidayed there as a child. It has remained an important place to me throughout my life, and I now return regularly with my spouse and our two young children.

I wish to make this submission because I have serious concerns regarding the proposed construction of a wind farm of this size on Arklow Bank. This is a shallow, dynamic offshore sandbank situated close to popular beaches, sensitive dune systems, protected habitats and established coastal communities.

I fully support Ireland's transition towards renewable energy and accept that offshore wind will form an important part of achieving national climate and energy targets. However, supporting offshore wind does not mean that every proposed location is suitable. My concern relates specifically to the scale and location of this development on Arklow Bank.

In my view, the additional documentation submitted by the Applicant does not provide sufficient certainty that the development will not negatively affect the structure of the sandbank, sediment transport, coastal erosion, neighbouring beaches, bathing-water quality, protected habitats or marine and bird life.

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I therefore respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse permission for the development in the proposed location. It should be located at least 20km from the shoreline where the environmental risks should be minimal. This would of course be a more expensive option for the Applicant but I feel that local environment must take priority.

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