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To: An Bord Pleanála,
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To whom it may concern,

I am writing to lodge my formal objection to the proposed Knockshanvo wind farm planning application, reference number **ABP-320705-24**.

As a resident of Broadford, Co. Clare, I take pride in our local community, which promotes peace, tranquility, and boasts one of the most beautiful landscapes in the county. Broadford is a small village but a heavily residential area, home to a great many families, young and old. It is a totally unsuitable area for the presence of turbines of this scale, for several reasons, as outlined below.

Environmental devastation

The natural flora and fauna of the area would be destroyed by the construction and presence of these turbines. A huge amount of woodland would have to be felled to make way for them, and whole ecosystems would be wiped out as a result. The landscape around Broadford would be permanently altered, with these enormous structures spoiling the natural beauty of the area. The sheer number of turbines proposed, which are to be amongst the highest ever constructed in Europe and the UK, would dominate the local surroundings, overwhelming the character of the landscape that exists there today.

The land on which these turbines are to be built is not suitable: it is moist and boggy, and I do not believe it can safely support turbines of this size and number. The devastating landslide disaster at Derrybrien on 31 October 2003, which occurred on land with similar characteristics to that proposed for the Knockshanvo wind farm, must be recalled here. The turbines now proposed are far larger than those built at Derrybrien, and it is my genuine fear that their construction could trigger a similar landslide, endangering residents, including myself and my family, who live only 2km away, along with properties, ecosystems, flora and fauna across Broadford. Given the increasingly heavy rainfall Broadford has experienced year-round in recent years, I believe this risk is real and must be properly and independently assessed before any permission is considered, not dismissed on the basis of assumptions about ground conditions that may no longer hold true.

Threat to protected species: the Lesser Horseshoe Bat and Hen Harrier

The 12 O'Clock Hills, which spans into the proposed Knockshanvo windfarm area, and the wider Broadford area, support protected species whose presence I do not believe has been adequately assessed. The Lesser Horseshoe Bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*) is one of Ireland's rarest mammals, strictly protected under Annex II and Annex IV of the EU Habitats Directive and under the Wildlife Acts. Ireland holds an internationally significant share of the north-western European population of this species, and County Clare is recognised as one of its strongholds. Lesser Horseshoe Bats fly low and close to cover, relying on continuous hedgerows, treelines and woodland edges to commute between roosts and foraging grounds, and they generally avoid crossing open, exposed ground. The felling of woodland and hedgerow for turbine bases, hardstanding and access roads, combined with construction noise, vibration and artificial lighting, would sever these commuting corridors and disturb roosting and foraging bats, quite possibly on a permanent basis.

The area is also of importance to the Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), one of Ireland's rarest birds of prey and a species listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive, which requires special conservation measures to protect its habitat. Hen Harriers depend on the kind of upland and marginal farmland/forestry mosaic habitat found around the 12 O'Clock Hills for breeding, roosting and foraging. The species is known to be vulnerable both to direct collision with turbine blades and to displacement, where birds abandon otherwise suitable habitat once turbines are built nearby, particularly during the breeding season. Given the number and scale of turbines proposed, the cumulative risk to this already vulnerable population would be severe.

Both species are legally protected, and any proper assessment of this project's impact on them must be based on thorough, current and site-specific survey data gathered across multiple seasons. For the reasons set out below, I do not believe the evidence submitted with this application meets that standard.

Destruction of residential life

These turbines are planned for an area surrounded by residential housing, with some homes less than 1km away. This is completely unacceptable and will cause serious stress and harm to the residents of Broadford. The sheer scale of these turbines will generate constant noise, day and night, denying local residents the peace they currently enjoy, with real implications for physical and mental health. The shadow flicker they produce has been linked in various studies to health effects, including for people with certain heart conditions and epilepsy. The wind farm will also obstruct natural sunlight for nearby homes. The prospect of Broadford residents being expected to live in the shadow of turbines of this size is simply unacceptable.

I am seriously concerned for the safety and wellbeing of my parents, who have lived in the area for more than 20 years, if these turbines are granted permission. They spent their life savings building a home in what was a peaceful, rural setting to raise their family, a tranquility now threatened by this development. Turbines of this scale, at this proximity, risk driving long-standing residents from their homes and eroding a community that generations of families have called home. Properties in the area are also likely to be significantly devalued.

It is important to note that the health and property-value case put forward in support of this application appears to rest on evidence that is neither current nor specific to Broadford. As I understand it, the health assessment relies substantially on a 2015 review of wind farms and health, and the property-value assessment on a 2016 study of house prices in Scotland. Both are now roughly a decade old, relate to a different jurisdiction with a different planning system and property market, and predate the scale of turbine now proposed at Broadford/Oatfield, which the applicant itself describes as amongst the largest ever built in Europe or the UK. Findings drawn from smaller, older turbines under a different planning regime cannot reasonably be relied upon to predict the health and financial impact of turbines of a wholly different scale on this community, and I do not believe this evidence base is sufficient to support a grant of permission.

Other European countries, such as Poland, have restricted the construction of wind farms in close proximity to residential housing. It is striking that no comparable protection applies here, and it suggests that Ireland's rules around the siting of wind farms near homes lag behind other parts of Europe.

Impact on Shannon Airport and aviation safety

Broadford lies in County Clare, within close proximity to Shannon Airport, one of the State's principal international airports and a critical piece of national aviation and economic infrastructure. Turbines of the height proposed at Broadford/Oatfield have the potential to interfere with the primary and secondary surveillance radar used by air traffic control, producing false or "ghost" returns, degrading radar coverage, or creating blind spots that compromise the safe separation of aircraft. Structures of this scale can also intrude on the obstacle limitation surfaces and protected airspace associated with an airport's approach and departure paths, and with instrument flight procedures more generally.

I have seen nothing in this application to indicate that an up-to-date, site-specific radar and airspace impact assessment has been carried out in consultation with Shannon Airport and the Irish Aviation Authority, properly accounting for a wind farm of this height, scale and location. Given the safety-critical nature of aviation operations in the vicinity of Shannon Airport, this is a serious gap in the application that I believe this Board must not overlook.

Destruction of local tourism

The 12 O'Clock Hills, on which turbines from this wind farm are also proposed, are a well-known walking trail that draws visitors from across Ireland and beyond to experience the natural beauty of the landscape and the rare flora and fauna found there, including the protected Lesser Horseshoe Bat. The trail is featured in guidebooks for the quality of its scenery, and it generates revenue for the local area that is badly needed, the product of years of community fundraising and maintenance. Construction of this wind farm would irreversibly change the character of the 12 O'Clock Hills, along with the rare species and landscape that make it worth visiting, and would put an end to the trails that people currently enjoy.

Insufficient and outdated evidence

Taken together, the ecological, health, property and aviation evidence put forward in support of this application falls well short of what a project of this scale and sensitivity requires. Key elements of the supporting case rely on studies roughly a decade old, drawn from other jurisdictions, and based on turbines far smaller than those now proposed. Ecological surveys for protected species such as the Lesser Horseshoe Bat and Hen Harrier need to be current, carried out across multiple seasons, and specific to this site; outdated or generic evidence, or evidence drawn from unrelated locations, is not a sufficient basis on which to grant permission for a development of this magnitude. I would ask the Board to scrutinise the evidential basis of this application closely, rather than accepting it at face value.

I would also note that inland wind farms have been shown in recent studies to be considerably less efficient at generating electricity than offshore wind farms, which can take advantage of the stronger, more consistent winds around the Irish coast. Offshore wind would be a far more suitable option for meeting our energy needs, with significantly higher efficiency. I was concerned to learn of the scale of grants awarded to Future Energy for the planning, construction and operation of this wind farm, which in my view shows insufficient regard for the people and landscape of East Clare. If comparable funding were instead made available to residents of East Clare, including Broadford, to install solar PV panels with battery storage, it would generate more usable, storable energy than these turbines can. Wind turbines of this kind generate electricity that must be used immediately, as there is no storage; this is a further sign of their inefficiency, particularly in the calmer winter months, which is precisely when demand for electricity is highest.

Conclusion

This wind farm should not be permitted to be constructed or operated. The chosen location is not suitable, and this development would put at risk the homes and wellbeing of hundreds of people, the natural landscape, and protected species including the Lesser Horseshoe Bat and Hen Harrier, while creating an unassessed risk to the safe operation of Shannon Airport. The evidence submitted in support of the application is neither current nor specific enough to justify a project of this scale.

I strongly object to the planning application for the Knockshanvo wind farm, reference number **ABP-320705-24**, and I ask that this objection be given full and serious consideration.

Signed: *Sarah Ward Murphy*

(Sarah Ward Murphy)

Date: ____ 04/08/2026 ____