



Ciarán CUFFE, MEP for Dublin

Green Party *Comhaontas Glas*

12-14 Mount Street Lower, D02 W710

@CiaranCuffe www.CiaranCuffe.ie

Irish Welcome - Cuirim Fáilte Roimh Ghaeilge

Designated Public Official under the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015
Oifigeach Poiblí Ainmnithe faoin Acht um Brústocaireacht a Rialáil 2015

14th June 2021

Shaping Our Electricity Future

By email consult@eirgrid.ie

EirGrid, 160 Shelbourne Road

Ballsbridge, D04 FW28

Re. Public Consultation on Shaping Our Electricity Future

Dear Madam/Sir,

I welcome the opportunity to make my views known on the development of Ireland's electricity grid. I believe that it is essential that Ireland increases its grid capacity in order to secure a sustainable green energy transition.

The current Climate Action Plan plans for the country to achieve 70% renewable electricity by 2030. Ireland is at risk of falling behind on its renewable energy targets and therefore it is necessary for our national grid to be bolstered so that it can handle the planned increased of the renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power. We need to reinforce areas of the grid that already have strong grid connections that are located near large energy consumers while continuing to develop cost effective offshore wind and solar projects off our coasts.

It is important to highlight the important role that the European Union can play in the decarbonisation of the Irish national grid through research and innovation programmes such as Horizon EU, and initiatives like the North Seas Energy Cooperation. Developing the cross border energy infrastructure between Member States with a focus on decarbonisation and I would like to see increased cooperation between Eirgrid and other European grid operators.

Any development of the national grid needs to take into proper consideration of the current biodiversity and climate emergency. While we must increase our national use of renewable energy sources, we must equally aim to protect our biodiversity rich oceans and landscapes. Fishing communities and environmentalist organisations and NGOs should be part of the development process and must be adequately consulted when we look to increase the number of offshore wind farms in Ireland.

An issue that I believe must be addressed is that of data farms. Data farms are responsible for 1.58% of Ireland's current carbon emissions, and it is estimated that by 2028, they will take up 29% of Ireland's total energy. There is a serious risk that if we do not increase our grid capacity then we will exceed our energy supply. Furthermore, we should look at examples of district heating models in Norway and Denmark that use recycled heat from data farms. Any future data farms in Ireland should come with a co-location requirement; meaning that they would need to be accompanied with energy storage facilities which then would avoid any waste heat and could be used to heat and power homes or other facilities located nearby.

The next 10 years will be instrumental in lessening our reliance on harmful fossil fuels. Ireland will not be able to complete its clean energy transition unless our grid has the capacity to take on more electricity from renewable energy sources. This should be a priority for Eirgrid in the coming months and years.

Sincerely,

Ciarán Cuffe

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