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Forward Planning Section
Mayo County Council
Áras an Chontae
The Mall
Castlebar
Co Mayo

Date: 22 May, 2013

By email: forwardplanning@mayococo.ie

Re: Draft Mayo County Development Plan 2014-2020

Dear Madam,

The Irish Wind Energy Association ("IWEA") is Ireland's leading renewable energy representative body and as such has an active interest in the potential for renewable energy, and in particular wind energy, in County Mayo and so IWEA feels it is critically important to make a submission to the Draft Mayo County Development Plan process. We very much welcome this opportunity and look forward to engaging constructively with you in the future.

Yours sincerely,

**sent by email, bears no signature*

Caitríona Diviney
Chief Operating Officer
Irish Wind Energy Association

IWEA Submission on the Draft Mayo County Development Plan 2014-2020

Introduction

Renewable energy development is a vital part of Ireland's strategy to tackle two major challenges facing us today – ensuring a secure energy supply and combating climate change. Wind energy produces indigenous renewable electricity while reducing greenhouse gas emissions by displacing traditional fossil fuels.

Ensuring the security of energy supply is a key part of the Government's recent *Framework for Sustainable Economic Revival*. Having regard to the current economic downturn, the framework acknowledges the need to put the energy/climate change agenda at the heart of Ireland's economic renewal. The large scale expansion of the Irish wind industry will be an extremely positive economic development for Ireland and will result in greater grid security and stability, job creation and lower energy prices. The wind energy sector generates more jobs per MW of power installed, per unit of energy produced and per euro of investment, than the fossil fuel energy sector. Industrial and craft jobs are created right through from manufacture and production to installation and maintenance. Although approximately 60% of these jobs are in the turbine and component manufacturing sector which are outside of Ireland, the remaining 40% of the jobs are in promotion, construction, engineering, project management, legal, accounting and financial services and operation and maintenance services.

The availability of a significant wind resource in the county provides Mayo with the opportunity to develop an industry with significant benefits to the local economy and broader society. Benefits will flow to the people of Mayo through land lease payments, local road upgrades, payment of significant commercial rates. There will also be benefits to local companies in engaging with construction, legal, finance and other professional services.

National Policy

There have been a number of policy documents published in recent years relating to targets for renewable energy developments. The Renewable Energy Strategy for County Mayo 2011-2020 (RES) references including:

- the Government Energy White Paper March 2007 where a target of 33% for renewable energy generation by 2020 is set,
- the National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012 policies to comply with CO₂ emission reduction targets
- The European Renewables Directive (2009/28/EC) on the promotion of renewable energy sources which establishes a binding target of 20% of overall EU energy consumption coming from renewable sources by 2020

Ireland's target under the Directive is for renewable resources to account for 16% of total energy consumption by 2020. In line with these commitments a target for electricity from renewable sources of 40% by 2020 was set. It is widely acknowledged that wind energy will contribute the vast bulk of this target.

In Section 6.3, Objective 1.3 of the RES a target is set of 42.5% of the County's electricity requirements to be provided from renewable sources by 2020. IWEA welcomes this target

and is confident that a positive attitude towards the development of wind energy projects will greatly assist in achieving this target.

Draft Mayo County Development Plan 2014-2020

IWEA welcomes Mayo County Council's commitment to Renewable Energy and its strategy in the Draft County Development Plan by the setting of the following objective:

RE-01 It is an objective of the Council to implement the Renewable Energy Strategy for Co. Mayo 2011-2020 or any amendment to the same.

EY-01 It is an objective of the Council to support and facilitate the provision of a reliable energy supply in the County, with emphasis on increasing energy supplies derived from renewable resources whilst seeking to protect and maintain bio-diversity, wildlife habitats, the landscape, nature conservation, and residential amenity.

EY-02 It is an objective of the Council to implement the Renewable Energy Strategy for Co. Mayo 2011-2020.

IWEA also supports the following objective to ensure consistent development is recognised:
54.2 All new wind farms or individual turbine proposals must accord with the Wind Energy Development Guidelines (DoEHLG & SEAI) 2006.

Conclusion

IWEA considers that Mayo County Council forward planning section has adopted a positive outlook on wind energy development and renewables to date and see that the enshrining of the RES within the draft plan will contribute to achieving the development of the wind resource in the County.

The existence of a significant resource which can be harnessed is well established and the recognition of the RES as a framework document to realise the potential in Mayo will facilitate the:

- Development of a sustainable, wind energy industry employing construction and professional service providers and attracting significant capital investment over the next 8 years
- Delivering of significant rates revenue to County Mayo annually
- Delivering of significant community benefit including land lease payments to local landowners annually
- Contributing to the funding of the construction of an electrical grid infrastructure that would be the basis of the new renewable energy industry as envisaged in the RES.

IWEA welcome the proactive approach by Mayo County Council in the new County Development Plan to realise the wind energy development potential identified in the RES and to adopt policies that encourage the implementation of the Strategy.