NIRIG
NORTHERN IRELAND
RENEWABLES INDUSTRY GROUP
The voice of IWEA & RenewableUK in Northern Ireland

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NIRIG response to Information Paper on Security of Electricity Supply in Northern Ireland

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The Northern Ireland Renewables Industry Group (NIRIG) is a joint collaboration between the Irish Wind Energy Association and RenewableUK. NIRIG represents the views of the large and small scale renewable energy industry in Northern Ireland, providing a conduit for knowledge exchange, policy development support and consensus on best practice between all stakeholders in renewable energy.

NIRIG notes the publication of the information paper on the security of electricity supply in Northern Ireland from 2016 and shares the concern of both DETI and NIAUR regarding the risks identified by SONI. NIRIG would like to add the following perspectives on this paper:

- NIRIG strongly agrees that increased interconnection is crucial for the future security of Northern Ireland's electricity supply. Full utilisation of Northern Ireland's considerable renewable energy resources will require significant interconnection. We would add our voice to the statement that it is imperative that the North-South interconnector is progressed and delivered as soon as possible. The Commission for Energy Regulation (CER) has proposed incentives for EirGrid and ESB Networks for energisation of the N-S interconnector by end-2017 and lodgement of planning permission by end-2013. We would support the introduction of similar incentive mechanisms for NIE. We would also agree that repair of the Moyle Interconnector is vital and would recommend that consideration be given to the long-term use of the Moyle to facilitate the net export of renewable electricity from Northern Ireland.

- NIRIG believes that the information paper does not recognise the role that renewables and, in particular, wind generation plays in positively contributing to Northern Ireland's security of electricity supply specifically and energy security generally. The capacity value of wind is recognised internationally through numerous studies and through the SEM's Capacity Payment Mechanism (CPM). The CPM recognises wind's ability to provide capacity, albeit at a reduced level to conventional generation, by compensating wind generators based on their metered generation. Furthermore, in a wider security of supply, wind generation's contribution must be recognised in terms of reducing Northern Ireland's dependency on imported fossil fuels to meet the needs of thermal generators as well as other sectors such as transport and heating.

- Should a decision be made to tender for additional generation in Northern Ireland, any additional generation must deliver a more flexible plant portfolio to enable SONI to deal with wind management and minimise curtailment of wind generation.

- NIRIG would support the introduction and utilisation of demand management solutions as much as possible.

- NIRIG would also support the development of energy storage and note the potential contribution of increased deployment of electric vehicles to electricity supply management.

- NIRIG would further note that continued and sustained progress on the DS3 project is a crucial factor in delivering a system that can increase renewables penetration and support a more secure electricity system.

- NIRIG would recommend that DETI, NIAUR NIE, SONI, DOE and other relevant stakeholders collaborate to identify, deliver and support an appropriate strategy for Northern Ireland's electricity network and indicate how such a strategy will facilitate the achievement of the Executive-endorsed Strategic Energy Framework renewable electricity targets and beyond. Such a strategy could be incorporated into the proposed review of the SEF in 2015.

NIRIG believes that strong collective effort will be needed to make sure that infrastructure development keeps pace with wind projects needing connection in Northern Ireland. We recognise the efforts of NIAUR and DETI to assess and analyse the risk to Northern Ireland's security of electricity supply and will continue to support efforts to move towards a more sustainable and secure electricity system.

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Meabh Cormacain
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