

15 October 2021

**RE: Draft Policy Statement on Mineral Exploration and Mining, SEA Environmental Report and AA Natura Impact Statement**

Dear Geoscience Policy Division,

The Irish Mining and Quarrying Society (IMQS) welcomes the formulation of the abovementioned statement and the recognition of the importance of mining and minerals to society. IMQS also welcomes the emphasis on environmental management of resources and believes that the proposed Minerals Advisory Group will provide a useful form in promoting of that objective.

IMQS includes practitioners from all disciplines in the extractive industries and supports the continuous professional development of its members. The absence of a recognised qualification for drilling personnel is a gap which IMQS and others have addressed by supporting the delivery of an Apprenticeship in Geo-Drilling at the Institute of Technology, Carlow. IMQS urges DECC and its regulatory functions to ensure that only properly qualified drillers be employed in mineral exploration and mining .

A factor militating against public confidence in regulatory processes is the perception that quarries are often poorly regulated by Local Authorities. While DECC is not the designated authority for quarries, IMQS reiterates its commitment to ensuring that procurement of aggregates and building materials by state and semi-state agencies be confined to properly regulated and planning compliant providers.

Kind regards,

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