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From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday 28 October 2022 09:02

To: Energy Consultation

Subject: Submission to consultation on energy security

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Dear Dept of Environment,

Please find below my submission to the consultation "Review of the security of energy supply of Ireland's electricity and natural gas systems". It is essential that Ireland makes a fast, rapid and just transition to a fossil free energy system as this is the best way to ensure our energy security and tackle the climate and energy poverty crises. I include more specific detail on how I believe Ireland should address energy security issues below.

Issue 1: National Energy Security (nuclear)

It is vital for a blackout free future that we have nationally owned energy utilities in order to deal with times of economic stress or emergency without interruptions to energy supplies due to the ever changing whims of 'the market'.

That is why I urge you to push for public ownership of energy utilities and massive state investment in state owned nuclear energy alongside renewables.

Nuclear is one of the safest and most reliable forms of energy out there as well as being the most efficient.

Without nuclear energy we are left depending on fossil fuels for decades to come when inevitable dips happen on the renewable grid.

A full transition away from fossil fuels is not possible without nuclear energy as a main secondary source/backup to renewables.

Issue 2: Massive investment in rail and public transport infrastructure

We have one of the worst rail systems in Europe. Transport uses alot of energy and fossil fuels.

Improving our rail network by electrifying it, expanding its capacity by at least double and adding new routes that service rural areas and small villages alongside currently existing town services will make the transition from oil do-able for all.

An expansion of TFI bus routes should be included in this expansion of public transport in order to make public transport a realistic option for everyone.

Those are my main issues, now moving to another list of priorities -

ISSUE ONE: There's no energy security without climate security

Any planned energy security infrastructure must align with Ireland's climate obligations. This means proposed infrastructure must include:

- An assessment of emissions associated with the project and how it aligns with Ireland's first two carbon budgets to 2030 and associated sectoral emissions ceilings.
- Full information on how it will support full decarbonisation of the energy system by the 2030s in accordance with Ireland's target of net zero emissions by 2050 at the latest.
- An examination of health and environmental impacts
- Full information on how the infrastructure will be used (e.g. only in an emergency) and how it will be phased out (e.g. in order to prevent undue reliance on backup infrastructure).

ISSUE TWO: Say No to Liquefied Natural Gas:

Make the current moratorium on LNG and fracked gas imports permanent through legislation.

The independent expert report makes clear that commercially-operated or state-owned LNG import terminal on land, such as Shannon LNG, should not be supported as it would like result in the importation of fracked gas, it would have high emissions and there's no guarantee volumes would be sufficient to cover a security of supply shock.

ISSUE THREE: Take steps to end current licences for fossil fuel exploration

The independent expert report makes clear that additional gas reserves from existing exploration licences, such as from Providence or Corrib should not be supported as "[a]dditional domestic production of natural gas could lock Ireland into a high-gas energy market...Unknown volume of any potential additional natural gas discoveries."

ISSUE FOUR: Introduce a moratorium on new data centres connecting to the electricity grid until electricity system pressures and gas lock-in risks are transparently and comprehensively addressed.

The assumption that electricity demand, particularly due to data centres, is allowed to continue to expand is deeply problematic. It is unacceptable, from both a moral and policy perspective, for data centres to continue to be approved and connected while households and smaller businesses are being asked to reduce their demand over the coming winter and beyond due to the gas crisis. The UCC MaREI research centre has highlighted a pause in the connection of new data centres as the most impactful single action the Government can take to reduce electricity demand. Gas demand projections are also not in accordance with climate targets.

ISSUE FIVE: Plan for a zero carbon electricity system by 2035

The independent expert report clarifies the positive contribution that can be made from energy efficiency, offshore wind, solar, battery storage and further interconnection. These must be prioritised instead of continuing dependence on dirty, expensive and unreliable fossil fuels.

The state has the technologies and the resources to protect and decarbonise our electricity system. The Government must choose to use them and not fall back into old ways of thinking.

ISSUE SIX: Support energy security at household level

A) Energy efficiency is energy security:

The Government must focus on energy efficiency solutions as they will permanently enhance our security, reduce emissions and protect households from rising energy costs. As the International Energy Agency has highlighted, the most secure gas molecule is the one you do not need.

Households and communities must be supported. The Government should insulate 100,000 homes in 2023, prioritising cheaper measures that save energy and money quickly. The focus must be on reaching those most at risk, particularly

those who rely on coal and turf. Don't wait for them to apply to SEAI for a grant, sit down with anti-poverty and community groups to plan a coordinated outreach campaign.

B) Phase out polluting boilers and the gas distribution network:

Installing fossil fuel boilers into the homes of low-income families risks locking them into fossil fuel heating for many years, leaving them vulnerable to global shocks like the current energy crisis. The SEAI have also noted 'a timeline and plan for fossil-fuel phase-out must urgently be put in place if we are to reach net zero by 2050'.

- Ban the further expansion of the gas distribution network from 2023 through legislation.
- Ban fossil fuel boilers in new buildings in 2023. Ban the sale of new fossil gas boilers for any building by 2028. Phase out fossil fuel boilers in existing buildings, prioritising residential homes by 2033. These measures must be backed by improved access to energy efficiency measures and alternative zero-carbon heating options.

C) Lead the solar transformation:

Government should prioritise the rollout of solar PV on the rooftop of 1 million homes by 2030 and on the rooftop of every school by 2025.

UCC MaREI research indicates that more than 1 million homes in Ireland have roof space and orientation suitable for 10 solar panels . This action would produce 25% of all residential electricity demand and would contribute to a culture change around the energy transition where citizens are at the heart of climate action.

Yours sincerely,



