



Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee

information

Media release - for immediate release, 8th October 2009

Leading Irish environment speaker Gavin Harte addressing the Nuclear Free Local Authorities Ireland Forum

The prominent renewable energy speaker Gavin Harte will be the keynote speaker at the Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) All-Ireland Forum meeting in Bray next week. Gavin Harte has been a high profile spokesperson on environmental and sustainability issues in Ireland for many years. He has worked as the national director of *An Taisce* and was the founder and developer of Ireland's first eco-village in Cloughjordan, Co Tipperary. NFLA Ireland are delighted Gavin has taken time out of his busy training schedule to talk to Councillors on the future for renewable energy in Ireland.

The NFLA All-Ireland Forum seminar will be in **Bray Town Hall on the 16th October**. It is considering how Ireland should respond to a number of key energy and safety questions – is renewable energy the answer to its future energy needs, how does it respond to new nuclear build in England and Wales, and is the Irish coast now safe from radioactive discharges emerging from Sellafield?

How will Ireland safeguard its future energy supply whilst reducing its carbon emissions to fulfil climate change commitments? NFLA Ireland welcomes the recent announcement that the European Investment Bank is to lend up to €500m to Ireland to help secure and green the country's electricity supplies (1). Ireland – North and South - has been very dependent on imported fossil fuels for its energy supply and there is a real need to diversify and take control of its energy production. €300m of the loan will be used to build an interconnector between Ireland and Wales to import and export wind power whilst the other €200m will be used by the ESB to develop renewable wind farms around Ireland. Meanwhile, in Northern Ireland, the NFLA welcomes the statement of Energy Minister Arlene Foster to commit to 40% of Northern Ireland's electricity being produced by renewable energy by 2020 (2).

In the NFLA October seminar, councillors will hear from Gavin Harte on why Ireland must reduce its 79% dependency on imported energy (3) and why renewable energy, rather than nuclear energy, is the only practical cost-effective answer to achieve this.

The seminar will also look at how Ireland should respond to a major expansion of nuclear power in England and Wales. The UK Government has ear-marked 11 nominated sites for potential new nuclear power stations and will be publishing its Nuclear Power Policy Statement later this month pushing this policy on further. NFLA Policy Adviser Pete Roche will provide councillors with an overview of the new build debate in the UK and the effective ways which Irish Councils and the Irish Governments (north and south) can play in challenging this process.

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Finally, the seminar will consider if Ireland's coastline is now 'safe' from radioactive discharges. In a recent report (4), the Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland claimed that discharge levels from nuclear reactors like Sellafield were now so low that there is no significant threat to human health or seafood in the Irish Sea. Former WWF marine pollution consultant Tim Deere-Jones will put the RPII's claims to the test and give councillors an overview of his wider concerns over this sensitive issue.

NFLA Ireland Joint Chair, Councillor Mark Dearey (Dundalk Town Council) said:

"I urge Councillors in Ireland to attend this important seminar on the energy issues affecting our island. Difficult decisions have to be made to reduce dependency on fossil fuels in Ireland at a time when our economy is not in great shape. Renewable energy is the obvious answer and this seminar confirms why Ireland should go for it, rather than nuclear energy, for our future generations to enjoy a sustainable future. I am particularly delighted Gavin Harte is able to speak to the Forum on this key issue.

I am also keen to hear how Ireland should respond to new nuclear build in the UK and whether our coastlines are really safe from Sellafield's radioactive legacy. This seminar comes at an important time in the debates on our energy and radioactive safety policies and I look forward to hearing more about it."

Ends

Further information: Mark Dearey +353 87 235 8197 or Sean Morris +44 (0) 161 234 3244

Sources:

- (1) Silicon Republic.com – EIB invests €500m in Ireland's Green Energy Sector, 28th September 2009
- (2) Northern Ireland Executive – Consultation on new energy future for Northern Ireland, 6th July 2009
- (3) Sustainable Energy Ireland, Research on Irish Energy Use, 2007.
- (4) Radiological Protection Institute for Ireland, Annual Report 2009

Seminar Programme:

**NFLA All –Ireland Forum seminar and business meeting
Bray Town Hall, 16th October 2009**

10.00am	Registration: Tea/Coffee
10.15am	Welcome: Cllr Michael Carr, Newry & Mourne District Council and Co-Chair, All Ireland NFLA Forum
10.20am	Gavin Harte , independent sustainable development consultant – Is renewable energy the answer to Ireland's future energy needs?
10.50am	Pete Roche , NFLA Policy Advisor – A Nuclear Renaissance? The nuclear energy debate in the UK: an overview for Irish Councils and how they should respond to it.
11.20am	Tim Deere-Jones , independent marine pollution consultant – Are Ireland's coasts and sea at safe levels from radioactive discharges?
11.50am	Sean Morris , NFLA Secretary – why should Irish Councils be involved in the Nuclear Free Local Authorities?
12.00am	Panel Discussion chaired by Cllr Mark Dearey , Dundalk Town Council and Co-Chair, All Ireland NFLA Forum
12.30pm	End of seminar

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