



*Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee*

# information

**MEDIA ADVISORY – for immediate release, 5<sup>th</sup> September 2011**

## **NFLA report shows Ireland can be a major exporter in renewable energy with Irish Councils playing their part**

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) publishes today a detailed briefing on potential future energy policy in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to show how the country can use its beneficial geography to become a major exporter of renewable energy to its European neighbours (1). The report also shows how the long-held NFLA energy policy of a wide renewable energy mix, a concerted energy efficiency programme and increased efforts to develop local microgeneration projects can provide more than adequate levels of electricity across Ireland, with Councils being at the cutting edge of this 'new energy revolution'.

The NFLA Policy Briefing is part of a series of four briefings showing how Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales can co-operate with each other to develop a wide variety of renewable energy, energy efficiency and microgeneration projects to generate its future needs, protect its energy security and provide a financial and jobs bonanza that will assist in each country moving out of recession through export-led growth.

The NFLA briefing on Irish policy shows that Ireland – north and south - could generate a practical accessible renewable resource totalling 675,000 Gigawatts/hour a year. This provides Ireland with potentially enough surplus energy to supply all the electricity needs of Britain and Belgium combined. It could also make Ireland a major energy exporter equivalent to recent oil production in oil-rich Oman. This can be achieved by dynamic and innovative Government policies in Dublin and Belfast coupled with strong co-operation with Irish local authorities and the private sector. Fuel poverty could also be substantially reduced if Ireland responds to this challenge positively and weans itself off fossil fuels and avoids nuclear power generation.

The briefing notes that:

- A practical and feasible first step is to increase the target for the percentage of energy produced from renewable sources in 2020 from 16% to 20%;
- With some of the worst levels of fuel poverty in Europe – almost a fifth of households in the Republic and up to 44% of the population in Northern Ireland, energy efficiency programmes and housing refurbishments must be a priority;
- Developing grid connections and continuing with research in wave and tidal energy can help Ireland build a renewable energy manufacturing base and maintain its global lead in ocean energy.
- Extending feed-in tariffs to solar PV could help local authorities across the island of Ireland play a major role in the Europe-wide local energy revolution, as well as helping to tackle fuel poverty;
- Local authorities in Ireland can lead the way in energy efficiency and micro-generation programmes. From fuel poverty busting solar panel installations on council housing to energy efficient street lighting schemes, to wood fuel biomass boiler installations in schools, councils can demonstrate how sustainable energy schemes can be used to tackle climate change and fuel poverty at the same time as making major savings in energy costs.;
- The Republic of Ireland Government and the Northern Ireland Assembly Government (with European Union assistance) need to provide essential support by developing an industrial

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strategy to ensure authorities can make the most out of the upcoming boom in the offshore wind and ocean energy industries.

This report will be further considered at the next NFLA All Ireland Forum meeting, which will be held in Wexford Civic Offices on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> November where Irish Government Minister Brendan Howlin is amongst the speakers (2).

NFLA All Ireland Forum Co-Chair and Dundalk Town Councillor Ollan Herr says:

“I am delighted with this briefing as it outlines what the NFLA has consistently said for a number of years – that Ireland can, with the sufficient political will, develop a local energy revolution involving renewables, energy efficiency and microgeneration. I urge the Irish Governments in Dublin and Belfast to consider it seriously and we are happy to discuss it with them further. We are sending it to Councils across Northern Ireland the Republic of Ireland to show the importance of being involved pro-actively in energy policy on the island of Ireland. With further co-operation between Ireland and Britain we would all benefit from such a sustainable energy policy, and I challenge Irish Councils and the Irish Governments to be as imaginative as the ideas outlined in the briefing.”

NFLA All Ireland Forum Co-Chair and Newry & Mourne District Councillor Michael Carr adds:

“The Councillors that attend the NFLA come from across the political spectrum in Ireland but we are united in the belief that there is a viable alternative to new nuclear build across the Irish Sea by simply co-operating on developing the great potential of renewable energy. I am delighted this briefing shows the positive ways Irish Councils can be part of this local energy revolution. I hope the Northern Ireland Assembly Government in Belfast can see the benefits of this valuable partnership and look to build upon it urgently.”

Ends

For interviews contact Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary on 00 44 (0)7771 930196 or Pete Roche, NFLA Policy Advisor on 00 44 (0)131 444 1445.

Notes for editors:

- (1) The NFLA Policy Briefing on Irish energy policy is attached with this media release.
- (2) The NFLA All Ireland Forum is on Friday November 11<sup>th</sup> in Wexford's new state-of-the-art civic offices. Details are as follows:

### **Ireland's response to new nuclear build in the UK:**

#### **Friday 11<sup>th</sup> November, Wexford Civic Offices, Carricklawn, County Wexford**

- 11.00am Opening welcomes by Councillor Danny Forde, Wexford Borough Council and Councillor Ollan Herr, Dundalk Town Council and NFLA All Ireland Forum Co-chair.
- 11.10am Nuclear new build in England and Wales – the Irish view. Brendan Howlin TD, Minister for Public Sector Reform, Wexford TD and former Minister for the Environment (invited)
- 11.40am Fukushima, Sellafield MOX plant and nuclear new build in the UK – an overview and why Irish Councils need to be involved in this debate. Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary (confirmed)
- 12.05pm Will nuclear new build increase radioactive discharges into the Irish Sea? What are the risks if it does? Tim Deere-Jones, independent marine pollution consultant (confirmed)
- 12.30pm The renewable energy alternative – why Ireland and the UK can work together to develop a renewable revolution. Brian Britton, Irish Offshore Wind Energy Association (invited)
- 12.55pm Panel discussion chaired by the Co-Chair of the NFLA All Ireland Forum, Councillor Michael Carr, Newry & Mourne District Council.

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