



Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee

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NFLA All Ireland Forum Media release - for immediate release, 30th July 2014
NFLA submits comments on Irish Government's Green Paper on energy – Ireland should say no to 'small' modular nuclear reactors and realise instead its huge renewable energy potential

Today the NFLA All Ireland Forum submits its detailed comments to the Irish Government's Green Paper consider the future direction of Irish energy policy. (1)

The Green Paper seeks to consider how Ireland will increase its energy security, reduce its fossil fuel dependence and reduce its carbon emissions. For the first time in a generation, the Green Paper also postulates the development of nuclear power in Ireland, replacing the coal fired power station in Moneypoint, County Clare, with a small modular nuclear reactor. (2)

In the NFLA's view, the Government should completely drop the idea of opening up discussions on building small nuclear reactors in Ireland. Nuclear power is among the least attractive climate change policy options because it is too costly, too slow, and safety is too uncertain. Ireland would also need to establish an expensive nuclear regulation system from scratch, which would take years to develop at significant and substantial cost.

The NFLA response goes into considerable detail about the economic and technical limitations of developing small modular nuclear reactors, using the United States as an example, and concludes it would be overly expensive for Ireland to pursue such a course of action, and a major policy mistake.

Instead the Government should promote the real empowerment of citizens, small companies, including farmers and local government, with a more ambitious community energy, renewable energy and energy efficiency strategy.

NFLA also concludes in its submission that:

- The Government needs to develop a new community energy strategy as soon as possible;
- It should work with farming organisations to promote small-scale renewable energy on farms;
- It should encourage Local Government to supply electricity, heat, energy efficiency and renewable energy programmes in a more joined-up manner;
- It should establish a Local Authority Energy Unit within the Department for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources to bring together best practice guidance for cities and local authorities relating to energy supply, heat delivery, energy efficiency programmes, renewable energy deployment, and access to finance;
- Such renewable energy technologies and energy efficiency measures have advanced with extraordinary speed over the past decade;
- The costs of renewable technologies have also declined substantially, especially solar photovoltaic cells - these technological and economic changes are likely to transform the energy utility industry;
- Ireland's future energy plans need to reflect these changes;
- The number of plans for systems based on 100% renewable energy is proliferating and it is becoming increasingly clear that generating systems comprising a mix of different commercially available renewable energy technologies, located on geographically dispersed sites, do not need base-load power stations to achieve the same reliability as fossil-fuelled systems;
- By empowering communities through such renewable energy promotion strategies the Government would fit in the missing piece of the jigsaw in solving the 'energy trilemma': reducing energy costs, tackling climate change and providing robust energy security;

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NFLA All Ireland Forum Co Chair, Councillor Mark Dearey said:

“The Nuclear Free Local Authorities All Ireland Forum puts forward in this submission our energy vision for Ireland. We fundamentally reject nuclear power as having any future role in the energy mix as an outdated energy system fast disappearing around the world. Instead, we believe there is fantastic potential in the development of a comprehensive joined-up community energy, renewable energy and energy efficiency strategy. If the Government empowers Irish communities, farmers and above all local authorities to help drive this strategy Ireland will have the greatest level of energy security in its economic history, will wean itself off its fossil fuel addiction, produce thousands of new jobs and above all, mitigate the damaging effects of climate change. I call on the Government to embrace our energy vision.”

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For more information please contact Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary on 00 44 161 234 3244 or Pete Roche, NFLA Policy Advisor on 00 44 131 444 1445.

Notes for editors:

- (1) The NFLA Policy Briefing providing a model response of its submission to the Government is attached with this media release. It will also go on the NFLA website:
<http://www.nuclearpolicy.info>
- (2) Energy Planning Unit, Department of Energy, Planning and Natural Resources, Green Paper on Energy Policy in Ireland, 12th May 2014
<http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/Energy/Energy+Planning+and+Electricity+Corporate+Division/>

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