

The Secretary
An Bord Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1



**CHAMBERS
IRELAND**
IN BUSINESS FOR BUSINESS

24 August 2015

Re: Planning Application VA0017 (North-South Interconnector)

Newmount House
22-24 Lower Mount Street
Dublin 2

Tel: +353 1 400 4300
Email: info@chambers.ie
www.chambers.ie
[@ChambersIreland](https://twitter.com/ChambersIreland)

To whom it may concern,

Please accept this letter as Chambers Ireland's submission in respect of the recent planning application for the North-South 400kV Interconnector submitted by EirGrid.

Chambers Ireland represents the largest network of businesses in the State. With almost 50 Chambers located in every major town and city in the country, we are uniquely positioned to understand the needs of the business community.

The development of the North-South Interconnector serves three core purposes: To improve the security of supply of electricity, to future-proof the economic growth potential of the North-East region, and to support renewable power generation and exportation in Ireland.

In consultation with Cootehill Chamber of Commerce, which is located in the proposed development corridor, Chambers Ireland supports the view that the North-South Interconnector must be completed to underpin Ireland's future economic growth strategy. Below, we have outlined the reasons why.

- ***Sustainable economic growth:***

The primary need for developing Ireland's electricity grid is to facilitate sustainable economic growth. Unless we develop the capacity of our grid and improve our security of supply, we risk facing a situation where our electricity network cannot meet demand from businesses and domestic consumers. If we allowed this to happen, we would undermine our businesses' ability to prosper and our ability as a country to attract new businesses. In this way, a reliable electricity supply is intricately linked to our national competitiveness and our economic growth prospects.

- ***Underpinning regional development:***

Grid infrastructure also facilitates inward investment. Sufficient energy capacity is a pre-requisite for local economies to be able to compete for investment and attract new companies establishing themselves in the local area providing local jobs. For Ireland in particular, energy intensive industries have a strong presence in the economy providing many Irish jobs and must be facilitated with sufficient capacity to meet their energy needs in order to retain their base in Ireland.

A 2013 Indecon Report on the wider economic benefits of grid investment concluded that 82% of businesses consider investment in the transmissions grid as very important or important to facilitate regional development. Granting planning permission for the

development of the 400kV Interconnector should in this regard also be considered an important step towards recreating regional jobs lost during the recession.

- **Facilitating interconnectivity:**

Increasing our level of interconnectivity with Northern Ireland and ultimately mainland Europe is of strategic interest to our future energy security, which also supports energy objectives at both national and EU level. Among such objectives is the requirement to interconnect our electricity network with that of other European countries to create a Single Electricity Market. By increasing our level of interconnection, Ireland will become more energy secure which has a positive effect on energy prices.

In addition hereto, increased interconnection offers opportunities for Ireland to export and expand green energy production which has positive environmental benefits and reduces our heavy dependence on imported energy. By developing the grid and in this way support the expansion of our renewable sector's market share, not only will we be able to meet EU renewable targets, we will also make our country less vulnerable to price fluctuations in international energy markets.

- **Importance of cost-efficiency:**

Cost effective energy is vital for Ireland's national competitiveness. For Ireland to remain an attractive destination to do business, our energy costs must be maintained at an efficient level. The length of time required to complete a project of this scale has a direct impact on the total construction cost which ultimately feeds into end-user tariffs. We therefore wish to emphasise the importance of the planning process not causing any unnecessary delays that will add to the cost of the project and thus negatively affect Irish energy consumers.

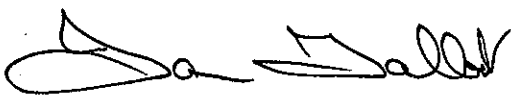
In summary, we consider the completion of the North-South Interconnector to be of immense importance for the Irish economy. The interconnector as proposed will increase the capacity, reliability and resilience of the Irish electricity market to the benefit of both domestic and business energy consumers.

In addition, the proposed interconnector supports EU goals of further energy market integration and green energy expansion. It is therefore in our interest to see the North-South Interconnector completed at the earliest stage possible.

We trust that our views set out in this letter will be given careful consideration in the planning process and look forward to hearing the outcome.

On behalf of Cootehill Chamber and Chambers Ireland,

Yours Sincerely,



Ian Talbot
Chief Executive