

**Opening Statement by Ian Talbot, CEO of Chambers Ireland – Oireachtas Committee on Climate, Environment and Energy – 15 October 2025**

Cathaoirleach, Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today on behalf of Chambers Ireland and our nationwide network of affiliated chambers.

Climate change is the defining challenge of our time. The State has committed to a 51% reduction in emissions by 2030 and climate neutrality by 2050 and while these are ambitious goals, ambition without delivery is merely rhetoric. We are now projected to achieve only a 23% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 which is a drop from last year's estimate of 29% and far short of our legally-binding 51% target.

In order to meet our climate targets, policy must be rooted in delivery, accountability and reform. Businesses are prepared to engage and support the green transition, but there are barriers constraining their full involvement.

**Security of Supply**

A stable and secure supply of energy is essential for businesses and communities. We consistently advocate for the development of renewables to reduce our overall fossil fuel dependence and meet our climate targets. Delivering climate-aligned infrastructure by investing in renewable energy connections, electrification, and smart grid technologies is essential to that objective.

Without reliable energy, all businesses face operational risks while the State risks losing its attractiveness for foreign direct investment (FDI), particularly in high-value manufacturing and data services. Equally, delays in customer connections and generation & grid constraints can have broader economic implications, especially as the State competes globally for infrastructure investment and supply chain capacity.

**Key barriers identified by our Network include:**

1. Infrastructure bottlenecks
2. Regulatory and planning challenges
3. Skills and cross-sector learning gaps
4. Financial and capacity constraints

## **Infrastructure Bottlenecks**

The opportunities presented by the Green Transition are significant but the delays and impediments to infrastructure severely hold us back from realising that potential. Offshore and offshore wind energy represent some of the most transformative economic and environmental opportunities for the State in the coming decades but we need to put policies into operation that are conducive towards delivering renewables and the associated substantial benefits they present.

## **Regulatory and Planning Challenges**

Related to delivering infrastructure, while we acknowledge the planning reform that has taken place within the past 12 months, the planning system is still a significant barrier to infrastructure delivery. Further reform is required and the courts and all relevant planning authorities should be resourced to process the multiple judicial reviews and appeals that hold up the planning system.

Up to 76 windfarms across Ireland are projected to lose their planning permission between now and 2030<sup>1</sup> and a critical obstacle to delivery is that the planning system functions in essence as a reactive licensing regime. As such the State's planning system has evolved towards negative development control rather than proactive infrastructure planning and is struggling to provide the type of system which is essential to coordinate grid upgrades, renewable energy integration and strategic infrastructure investment. Our members in many areas are also concerned about the pace of delivery of flood defences.

## **Skills and Cross Sector Learning Gaps**

I think we all acknowledge the critical importance of education, lifelong learning, building apprenticeship programs. The unlocking of the National Training Fund to focus on the skills required for decarbonisation is critical to enhance our competitiveness and underpin progress towards our climate targets.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://windenergyireland.com/images/files/final-repowering-ireland-report-june-2024.pdf>

## **Financial and Capacity Constraints**

In terms of actions to help businesses play their part, targeted supports, decarbonisation action plans and the expansion of circular economy initiatives are all essential to help businesses decarbonise. Funding mechanisms like the Climate Planning Fund and the Green Transition Fund ought to be scaled up, while streamlining access to advisory services and capital grants will also help businesses decarbonise. Unlocking access to Ireland's €160+ billion in retail savings could help mobilise the private capital needed to support the green transition. Supporting the EU in the delivery of the Capital Markets Union and the Savings and Investment Union are all equally essential to ensure private loan and equity finance are facilitated to ensure critical investment takes place, including in our Ports. We must also continue our focus on the defence of critical infrastructure.

## **The importance of being 'technology neutral'**

All renewable technologies - including wind, biomethane, Hydrogen and others - present a significant economic and strategic opportunity and will play a role in meeting our climate targets and an open mind should be kept on the continued evolution of technology such as nuclear. We welcome the SEAI's multi-year study<sup>2</sup> on decarbonising the electricity system. The State has within its grasp the potential to secure its energy future, but realising this vision will require significant progress across all areas I have referred to earlier including planning reform, infrastructure development and public & private investment in the technologies and skills that can drive the transition forward, supporting local industry, resilience and long-term competitiveness.

The challenge is clear but so is the opportunity, if we act with urgency and purpose.

Thank you for your attention and we look forward to your questions.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.seai.ie/renewable-energy/decarbonised-electricity-system-study>