

Energy Forum 2008 Government embraces new energy era

Industry and Government to work together to unlock immense economic and environmental opportunities €200 million to be spent on energy-related R&D

Dublin, 6th March 2008

Today, Taoiseach Bertie Ahern TD was the keynote speaker at Energy Forum 2008. Attending the Forum were over 400 key players in the energy industry in Ireland. Hosted by Energy Minister Eamon Ryan, the Forum was addressed by Ministers Gormley, Martin, Coughlan, and Dempsey as well as Ministers of State Wallace and McGuinness.

The Forum, the first of its kind in Ireland, set the issues of energy security and climate change at the heart of Government policy and prioritisation. Its aim was for Government to interact with the industry in order for Ireland to become a world leader in renewable energy and energy efficiency. Achieving these twin aims will ensure Ireland's continued economic competitiveness, create the jobs of the future and fulfil our climate change targets.

Speaking at the Forum, **Taoiseach Bertie Ahern** TD said, "Our objective is an energy policy based on secure sources of supply that promotes competitiveness, and is environmentally sustainable. The Government intends to provide the enabling environment for Ireland to unlock the immense opportunities that this new energy era can bring to our economy in job creation and inward investment

The Taoiseach confirmed that the Government will invest over €200 million in energy-related Research and Development, saying "Today's announcement is significant and shows our determination to honour our commitments in this important area under the Programme for Government. Through Research and Development Ireland can take a lead in developing environmental solutions and products. This investment will achieve a win/win situation of improved competitiveness and environmental performance. The €200 million will be made available over the next 5 years."

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources **Eamon Ryan** said, "Today is a demonstration of the cross-Government commitment to the new energy era. I am pleased today to launch a report on energy efficiency, which shows that the benefits of energy efficiency to the Irish economy far outweigh the costs. Energy efficiency is the least expensive and most intelligent means of making substantial cuts in our fossil fuel bills and greenhouse gas emissions. Initiatives such as smart metering, building improvements and peak demand reduction will benefit the Irish economy to the tune of **€3.6 billion**. Notably, they will reduce our carbon emissions by over 6 million tonnes."

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government **John Gormley** said

"Everything we do in relation to sustainable energy - be it the promotion of energy efficiency, the fostering of a vibrant renewable electricity sector or the development of a domestic market for biomass - will contribute to reducing Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions."

Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment **Micheál Martin** said

"Through innovation as well as investments such as today's in Research and Development Irish business with the support of the Government is viewing the environment and our energy needs not as challenges but as opportunities whereby Ireland can take a lead in the development of cutting edge solutions. By becoming

world leaders in this field we are not only providing solutions but also securing jobs and securing energy supplies in our communities well into the future."

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food **Mary Coughlan** said

"What is clear is that a biofuel industry can only develop in Ireland if it generates sufficient economic return for investors and producers. Much will depend on the development of supply chains and end use markets. Last year I introduced a number of incentives to encourage farmers to grow energy crops. These measures are intended to complement the excise relief measures introduced by the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources. I believe it is important that supply and demand side measures go hand in hand if we are to successfully develop this sector."

Minister for Transport **Noel Dempsey** said

"As Minister for Transport I have no doubt that opportunities in the transport sector are growing for those who have a commitment to sustainable energy. In fact, I'm convinced that the biofuel industry will be a major growth area that can deliver significant and multiple benefits. My vision of a sustainable travel and transport system in this country by 2020 will, among other things, provide additional momentum for increased reliance on biofuels. The opportunities for the sustainable energy sector are there to be grasped."