



**WIND ENERGY
IRELAND**

Onshore wind energy briefing note

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1 Introduction

At a time when, across Ireland and the world, more and more people are demanding action on climate change, when concerns around the security of our energy supply have been to the fore for several years and consumers have been facing record high electricity prices because we depend too much on imported fossil fuels it is disappointing to see protests which will lead to dirtier energy, more expensive energy and prolong our dependence on other countries for our power.

2 Ireland gets the climate crisis – and recognises wind farms as part of the solution

- The global climate crisis and the urgent need to decarbonise Ireland’s energy supply by 2050 is the single greatest challenge we face.
- People in Ireland understand that we will not be immune to the impact of increased rainfall, rising temperatures and sea levels.
- 95 per cent of Irish people agree climate change is happening and is caused by human activities
- 81 per cent of people in Ireland indicate they are worried or very worried about climate change
- 70 per cent of people in Ireland understand that using energy from renewable sources is a large contributor to reducing our carbon footprint.

“Climate Change in the Irish Mind” the recent Environmental Protection Agency / Yale Program on Climate Change Communication Report – May 2024

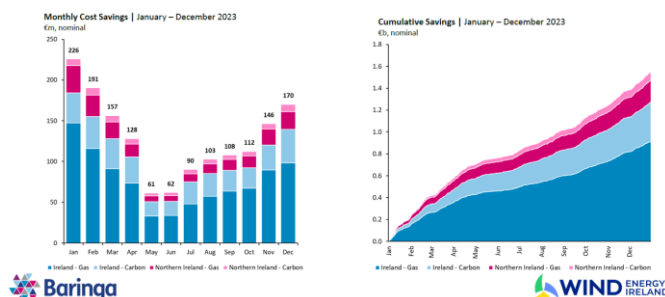
- **Two-thirds of people living within 1 kilometre of a wind farm, polled by the SEAI in an independent survey in 2023, believe Ireland needs more wind farms, not fewer.**
- According to the latest polling support for wind farms in Ireland is consistently in the high 70 to early 80 per cent. Fewer than 10 per cent oppose wind farms.
- Onshore wind energy will save more carbon emissions this decade than any other technology in the entire Climate Action Plan.
- We are very ambitious for the energy that can be generated by offshore wind in Irish waters, however **we continue to need to build and operate onshore wind farms**. It is our onshore wind farms which have generated one-third of our electricity consistently over the past few years and which will be key in meeting our 2030 climate action targets.

3 Irish people want affordable energy and a secure source of energy. Wind delivers.

- Wind power is Ireland’s number one source of clean energy and provided 38 per cent of the country’s electricity over the first four months of 2024.
- Wind energy drives down the wholesale price of electricity, often by as much as half, helping us all feel the impact of wind energy in our wallets.
- Last year Irish wind farms saved us spending €1.6 billion on gas, most of which would have been imported, and cut carbon emissions by twice as much as every other renewable energy source combined.

Wind energy saved €1.6 billion in gas costs in 2023

Wind also saved the equivalent annual emissions of 1.9 million cars across the island



- Ireland spends a million euro an hour importing fossil fuels. That's money that could stay in Ireland, supporting Irish people and communities, if we replace fossil fuels with wind energy.
- 6,000 people are already employed in the wind industry in Ireland. Offshore wind will create thousands more jobs. Every job that uses electricity – quite possibly your job – is also supported by clean, cost effective, Irish wind energy.
- [A 2021 KPMG report](#) estimated that Ireland's wind farms are worth €410 million in Gross Added Value to the Irish economy and it is estimated today they pay €50 million in rates to rural County Councils. In six counties they are more than 10 per cent of the entire commercial rates income.

4 Consequences of delay

The target in the Climate Action Plan is to increase our onshore wind energy capacity from its current 4,700 MW to 9,000 MW by the end of 2030.

The small minority of people who are opposed to wind energy are absolutely entitled to hold that viewpoint and to campaign and protest peacefully but we must all be honest with each other about the consequences of missing that target.

- It means dirtier energy, more of the carbon emissions that are driving the climate emergency and threatening our way of life.
- It means more expensive energy, ensuring we are continually exposed to an increasingly volatile fossil fuel market. No one who saw the record high electricity bills we saw over the last two years wants a repeat of that.
- And it means greater dependency on others for our power. Instead of being able to generate the power we need in Ireland, and even to export it, we will remain obliged to depend on others and to see money leaving the country instead of supporting Irish businesses and communities.

5 Conclusion

- We're fortunate in Ireland to have a vast wind resource, this opens choices for us. Our democratically elected representatives have set our targets in the Climate Action Plan.
- Until now, relatively few of us have lived near our power generators. Generating more of our electricity from wind energy means more of us will face choices about supporting or opposing the generation clean electricity.
- Few of us can live without electricity – generating and transporting it means seeing wind turbines and the pylons and substations that transport the electricity along our grid.

At a time when Ireland has – for the first time in our history – an abundant natural resource, a resource which can be sustainably developed for the prosperity of our people and simultaneously tackle the climate emergency, we need to talk about how we accelerate the development of onshore wind energy, not restrict it.

Find out more at www.windenergyireland.com.