To whom it may concern,

There is a great opportunity at present to encourage SMEs, farmers, landowners and indeed homeowners to invest in micro energy generation in Ireland.

Small farmers, SMEs, etc., should be actively encouraged to invest in Micro Energy technologies including, Micro-Hydro Electric turbines, Small-scale wind turbines (up to 500kwp) Photovoltaic solar systems, Micro Combined Heat and Power (MicroCHP), etc. This can be done through individuals, businesses and land owners within local communities, through green cooperatives, etc.

These sectors are hard pressed at present and micro energy production could mean the difference between profit and loss for many. Furthermore, any increase in income would have a positive impact on the whole surrounding community in which these are located resulting from increased spending. Many additional jobs would also be created in service, installation, sales, etc.

On the other hand, I am very concerned with very large scale wind Farms such as the recent ones proposed for the Midlands. These are just too large for land based wind turbines, are so high as to be grotesque, and often sited too close to domestic housing relative to their size. In contrast to micro generation these large corporate style wind farms do not greatly benefit the local community but rather are a source of much contention. They give green energy a bad name and will turn sceptical people into a force deeply antagonistic to Wind generation and possibly Green technology in general.

There are currently many frustrating anomalies in Ireland regarding green energy. For example:

As a homeowner, at present I would like to install a small 2-6 kVp solar photovoltaic system ground mounted in my garden at the rear of my house. However, planning would be required. The size allowed at present without going through the planning process is too small to be even remotely viable. Therefore, I won’t bother doing so under the present regulations. I could however, install an adequate wind turbine in my back garden under current regulations but I do not have enough clean wind to make this viable either. So there is a bias in favour of wind over solar photovoltaic even though suitable wind turbine sites are far more limited than are those suitable for solar photovoltaic.

However, I believe that in Northern Ireland, Schools, farms and businesses may install a solar photovoltaic system within certain limitations without planning. This I feel would be at least equally effective in this jurisdiction due to it’s more southerly latitude.

The implementation of the Energy Efficiency Directive in Ireland offers us a great opportunity to get it right.

I do hope that Mr. Rabbitte and the Department of Energy are successful in implementing a broad range of measures which will encourage the Irish economy by prudently promoting sustainable energy production, while encouraging local communities, green cooperatives, etc. and through making wise use of the vast natural resources with which our Country is truly blessed.

Breaffy,
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