

Southern Regional Assembly (SRA),

By email to: rses@southernassembly.ie

Date: 10th October 2019

Re: Coillte Submission to material amendments on Southern Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

Dear Sir/Madam,

Coillte welcomes the opportunity to make a submission on the material amendments to the Southern Regional Assembly (SRA) Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES). As custodians of over 6% of the administrative area we believe we can play a key role in supporting the delivery of many of the objectives of the RSES.

As mentioned in our submission on the Draft RSES Coillte is focused on enabling key national policy objectives that cover a range of industries including renewable energy, housing, healthcare, education, inward investment, infrastructure development, water, tourism and agriculture. In particular Coillte is one of the biggest developers of renewable energy in the State.

In relation to the proposed material amendments, Coillte strongly welcomes the additional text and the inclusion of the '*Climate Action Plan 2019*'. We also welcome the recognition of the urgency surrounding the Region's associated Priority Action Areas.

Following on from our original submission, we had hoped the 'material amendments' as recently published might contain additional text identifying the potential of on-shore wind to contextualise and strengthen the objectives in the Strategy as follows:

It is essential that Ireland and the Region continues to build on the success of renewable electricity to date by continuing to support further growth out to 2030 and beyond. All renewable technologies are needed to support this transition, including the continued development of on-shore wind. The significant latent opportunities for on-shore wind must be harnessed and the speed of deployment of this type of technology, as well as the rapidly decreasing costs, make it a critical technology over the lifetime of the RSES and one that ensures economic benefit for the end consumer. The net cost of wind energy for Irish consumers has amounted to less than €1 per person per year since 2000¹. This technology thus has an important role in delivering value and clean electricity for Ireland.

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We believe the above text remains appropriate as part of the new proposed Section on climate change. In addition we suggest that the national ambitions for climate change should be translated into regional and time based targets (MWs) in order to ensure we achieve what is needed at a subsequent county level to reach the scale of ambition in the Climate Action Plan.

Such a regional approach to delivering renewable energy would mirror the Assembly's strong tradition of ensuring sectoral objectives are met in a consistent manner across each local authority for example waste, housing and retail sectors. These were successfully met through the provision of Management Plans, population / zoning targets and Retail Planning Guidelines respectively.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the RSES.

Yours sincerely,

[No signature, sent by email]

Sinead O'Malley

Planning Manager, Coillte