

## Mid West Plans For Renewable Energy As EUR62m Carbon Levy Looms

*The Mid West Region's Energy Balance & Climate Change Strategy proposes 70% reduction in Co2 emissions by 2010.*

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The Mid West Region of Ireland can achieve a 70% reduction in carbon emissions by 2010 saving itself millions of Euro in carbon levy.

That is according to the Mid West Regional Authority (MWRA), which this morning published the country's first Regional Climate Change Strategy at its 14th annual conference in Adare, Co. Limerick.

The Mid West Region's Energy Balance & Climate Change Strategy outlines how the harnessing of the region's renewable energy resources complemented by increased individual responsibility for energy consumption and emissions can help the Mid West honour its Kyoto commitments.

Among the proposed measures is the increased use of green energy by the commercial and industrial sectors; the full enforcement of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive; investment in the development of tidal energy projects along the Shannon Estuary and Clare coastline; increased individual responsibility for reducing Co2 emissions in the transport sector; and the exploitation of the region's considerable wood biomass resource.

'This strategy document represents Ireland's most comprehensive plan ever to tackle climate change and improve energy efficiency at a regional level', stated Mr. Liam Conneally, Director of the MWRA.

He added that the strategy had been developed as a working document ensuring the sustainability of the region's energy needs while playing a substantial role in supporting the Government in achieving Ireland's Kyoto commitments.

'The Mid West is evidently living beyond its means, in terms of its impact on the environment, and could face a EUR62m bill in carbon levy by 2010 unless immediate remedial action is taken. This Strategy demonstrates how this bill can be slashed by up to 70% or EUR44m', commented Mr. Conneally

He explained that the Mid West was well placed to exploit its substantial renewable energy resources of wind, wave, wood and energy crops. The Director indicated, however, that a key restriction for the development of renewable energy electricity projects continued to be access to the National Grid for sale of electricity.

'Continued pressure needs to be applied to facilitate the connection of future projects to the grid and targets raised to facilitate future development. In the short-term wind energy will be the dominant supplier of renewable energy electricity in the Region. However, significant developments in the bio energy field are possible with other technologies also contributing', stated Mr. Conneally.

Launching the Mid West Region's Energy Balance & Climate Change Strategy on behalf of the

MWRA, Mr. Tony Killeen T.D., Junior Environment and Energy Minister, said, 'This policy document is a timely contribution to national policy on climate change. It correctly states that climate change is one of the key challenges facing humanity in the 21st Century. The consequences of not responding effectively gives rise to a threat not just to our current and future well-being, but to our very existence in the long-term.'

The Minister welcomed the Strategy conclusions concerning individual responsibility for energy consumption and emissions.

'An essential requirement in effectively combating climate change is for people and communities to 'think global and act local'. Without that buy-in at the individual, community and local level, success is likely to be much more difficult', he stated.

Other guest speakers at today's conference include Mr. Brian Crowley, Member of European Parliament - 'The European perspective on climate change and the role of renewable energy'; Mr. Pat Stephens, Limerick/Clare Energy Agency and Mr. Seamus Hoyne, Tipperary Energy Agency - 'Regional perspective on renewable energy'; Mr. George Burke, Principal Officer, Planning, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government - 'Proposed planning exemptions for renewable energy technologies'; and Mr. Gerry Sheeran, Senior Planner, Limerick County Council - 'Implementing renewable energy policy at local authority level'

According to Councillor Lilly Wallace, Cathaoirleach of the MWRA, 'The Regional Climate Change Strategy highlights that significant progress can be made within the study region towards meeting the Kyoto targets. However, based on a wide range of standard measures, the total CO2 savings identified will still be approximately 25% below that required.'

'It is clear that measures above and beyond the standard measures proposed will be required for the study region to meet its targets. The Energy Production and Supply sector is currently carrying the greatest share of CO2 savings. Further action is required in the other sectors in the near future in particular the Transport sector will require collective and individual action to achieve savings', concluded Councillor Wallace.

The Mid West Region's Energy Balance & Climate Change Strategy has evolved from reports completed by the Limerick Clare Energy Agency and Tipperary Energy Agency, and is supported by Tipperary LEADER Group Ltd, Clare County Council, Limerick City Council, Limerick County Council and North Tipperary County Council.

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Notes to Editor:

- About the MWRA - The MWRA is one of the Republic of Ireland's eight statutory regions and comprises the administrative areas of Clare, North Tipperary Limerick County Councils, along with Limerick City Council. The Nenagh-based Authority has twenty-six elected representatives and has responsibility to promote the coordinated delivery of Public Services in the Mid West Region. It is also Secretariat to the Government appointed Shannon Airport Marketing Consultative Committee (SAMCC). For more see [www.mwra.ie](http://www.mwra.ie).

- For further information or to arrange an interview please contact Mark Dunphy of Dunphy Public Relations on 086-8534900 or [media@dunphypr.com](mailto:media@dunphypr.com)
- An Executive Summary of the Mid West Region's Energy Balance & Climate Change Strategy is also available on request.

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