

Our Case Number: ACP-323980-25



**An
Coimisiún
Pleanála**

Ibec
c/o Aidan Sweeney
84/86 Lower Baggot Street
Dublin 2

Date: 04 August 2026

Re: Proposed Water Supply Project for the Eastern and Midlands Region
in the counties of Clare, Limerick, Tipperary, Offaly, Kildare, and Dublin.

Dear Sir / Madam,

An Coimisiún Pleanála has received your submission in relation to the above-mentioned proposed development and will take it into consideration in its determination of the matter.

The Commission will revert to you in due course in respect of this matter.

Please be advised that a copy of all submissions/observations received in relation to the application will be made available for inspection on the Commission's website at the following link:
<https://www.pleanala.ie/en-ie/case/323980>.

If you have any queries in the meantime, please contact the undersigned officer of the Commission. Please quote the above mentioned An Coimisiún Pleanála reference number in any correspondence or telephone contact with the Commission.

Yours faithfully,

Eimear Reilly
Executive Officer
Direct Line: 01-8737184

PA09

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Eimear Reilly

From: LAPS
Sent: Tuesday 21 July 2026 16:29
To: Eimear Reilly
Subject: FW: PA92.323980 - Observation in Support of the Proposed Water Supply Project Eastern and Midlands Region in the counties of Clare, Limerick, Tipperary, Offaly, Kildare, and Dublin (ACP-323980-25)
Attachments: Ibec_Water Supply Project Observation_ACP-323980-25.pdf
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed
Categories: PA Only

From: Aidan Sweeney <aidan.sweeney@ibec.ie>
Sent: Tuesday 21 July 2026 14:16
To: LAPS <laps@pleanala.ie>
Cc: Juan Pablo Martinez <juanpablo.martinez@ibec.ie>
Subject: PA92.323980 - Observation in Support of the Proposed Water Supply Project Eastern and Midlands Region in the counties of Clare, Limerick, Tipperary, Offaly, Kildare, and Dublin (ACP-323980-25)

You don't often get email from aidan.sweeney@ibec.ie. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Ms Reilly,

Please find attached the response to An Coimisiún Pleanála's correspondence dated 24th and 26th June 2026 requesting Ibec to make a submission or observation in relation to the response (6th May and 2nd June) received from the applicant, Uisce Éireann. The case number is ACP-323980-25 (PA92.323980).

Regards,

Aidan

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EU Transparency register 479468313744-50

To: Ms Eimear Reilly,
Executive Officer,
An Coimisiún Pleanála,
64 Marlborough Street,
D01 V902

Date: 21st July 2026

Ref: **PA92.323980 - Observation in Support of the Proposed Water Supply Project Eastern and Midlands Region in the counties of Clare, Limerick, Tipperary, Offaly, Kildare, and Dublin (ACP-323980-25)**

Dear Ms Reilly,

Ibec welcomes the opportunity to submit this observation in response to An Coimisiún Pleanála's correspondence dated 24th and 26th June 2026. As Ireland's largest business representative organisation, speaking on behalf of over 39 trade associations and thousands of employers, we wish to reaffirm our full support for the Water Supply Project – Eastern and Midlands Region (WSP).

Having reviewed Uisce Éireann's *Response to Submissions Report* (May 2026) and supplementary responses, Ibec believes UÉ has robustly addressed the concerns raised during the statutory consultation phase. We commend the comprehensive approach taken to clarify the project's strategic necessity, technical design, and environmental compliance.

Endorsing Uisce Éireann's Response to Submissions

Ibec strongly aligns with the clarifications provided by Uisce Éireann regarding the critical need for this infrastructure and the exhaustive assessment of reasonable alternatives.

- > **The Reality of the Water Deficit:** The water supply in the Greater Dublin Area and the wider East and Midlands Region is operating on a knife edge. As Uisce Éireann has highlighted, current demand is consistently exceeding sustainable production capacities. The recent introduction of a Water Conservation Order across Dublin, South Tipperary, Kildare, Meath, Wexford, and Wicklow illustrates the severe and sustained pressure on water treatment plants, treated water reservoirs, and the wider network following periods of exceptionally warm and dry weather.

- > **The Limits of Demand Management:** While Ibec fully supports Uisce Éireann's ongoing efforts to enhance network management, manage pressure, and repair leaks, these measures alone cannot solve the structural deficit. Even with robust public conservation campaigns, the region is forecast to require 34% more water by 2044 to support a population projected to grow by over 25%.
- > **Addressing Single-Source Vulnerability:** Uisce Éireann's responses successfully reinforce that an over-dependence on the River Liffey is a critical vulnerability. A new Shannon-based abstraction is the only realistic, long-term solution to ensure resilience, providing safe and secure water for up to 50% of the State's population while mitigating the impacts of climate-induced extreme weather.
- > **Environmental Compliance:** We note Uisce Éireann's comprehensive clarifications within the Natura Impact Statement (NIS) and the Water Status Impact Assessment Report. These assessments demonstrate that the project aligns with the Water Framework Directive and will not adversely impact biodiversity or the hydrological integrity of the Shannon.

Planning Timelines and Economic Implications

Ibec deeply respects the rigorous planning and environmental assessments that An Coimisiún Pleanála must undertake. A robust and transparent planning process is essential for delivering projects of this scale and securing public confidence.

However, we must also emphasize the immense economic and infrastructural implications of the current timeline. The 2024 Planning and Development Act established a clear mandate for timely decisions on Strategic Infrastructure Development projects, targeting a 48-week turnaround. Clarity and confidence in these timelines are vital for all strategic projects—particularly those anticipated to be designated under the Critical Infrastructure Bill—as prolonged uncertainty severely disrupts forward procurement and international supply chains.

While delayed planning decisions will inevitably introduce significant inflationary costs to the WSP, these capital increases pale in comparison to the catastrophic economic impacts that major, prolonged water outages would inflict on the region if a new source were not secured. The timely delivery of water infrastructure remains a binding constraint on the National Planning Framework's targets, impeding housing delivery, Foreign Direct Investment, and the expansion of high-value, regulated industries.

Conclusion

Given the urgent national need to integrate this new water source into the supply network by 2032, we must ensure that all state agencies work collaboratively to maintain delivery timelines. Uisce Éireann has committed to adapting its current programme to ensure efficient delivery. In turn, Ibec strongly urges An Coimisiún Pleanála to make every possible effort to expedite its processes and determine this application well before the intended July 2027 timeframe.

Yours sincerely,



Aidan Sweeney
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Environmental Sustainability
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