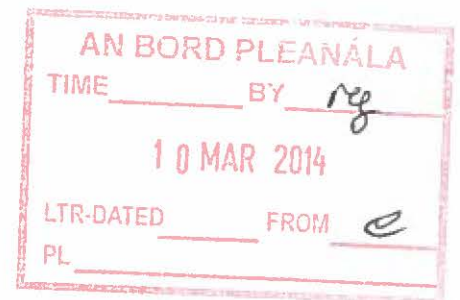


An Bord Pleanála
64, Marlborough Street
Dublin 1

Ref: 61.PA.0033

21st February 2014

Dear Sirs,



We refer to the Planning Application from Galway Harbour Company regarding the extension of Galway Port.

The Skál Club of Galway is very supportive of this planning application and applauds Galway Harbour Company on their commitment in bringing this project to planning stage. We would request that An Bord Pleanála consider the following in support of the application.

The Skál Club of Galway is a member of Skál Ireland and Skál International and the Galway Club was formed in 1966. Skál is a professional organisation of tourism leaders located all over the world, promoting global tourism and friendship. It is the only international group uniting all branches of the travel and tourism industry.

The members are all senior leaders in their respective organisations and meet at local, national and international level. In Ireland there are currently four active clubs. These are affiliated to Skál International which is based in Spain. The Galway club membership is made up of representatives from hotels, restaurants, accommodation providers, tour operators, golf clubs, travel partners, Fáilte Ireland and Galway Mayo Institute of Technology. This far reaching membership ensures all aspects of the ever developing tourism sector is represented at all forums and the club quite literally represents businesses who provide vast employment in the region.

TIME _____ BY _____
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The extension of the Port is an exciting opportunity for Galway and could be of significant benefit to the county and indeed the West of Ireland. The tourism industry has been significantly boosted in recent years with improved tourism offerings, the government supported Gathering initiative and the ongoing development of the Wild Atlantic Way. If the Port extension proceeds local tourism businesses could benefit in many ways and the development will increase the visitor footfall to the region.

If the development was to proceed accommodation and food services will be in demand by those working on the project, it is expected up to 200 people may be employed on this project. In addition with the development of the port will come additional employment opportunities that will benefit not only the local economy but the region. That factor alone cannot be overlooked.

With the possible development of the port the potential to welcome the cruise industry to the West of Ireland is significant on many fronts. The contribution from cruise tourism, comes through the spending by cruise passengers and crew.

The cruise ship industry has been the fastest growing segment in the travel industry around the world. Since 1980 the average annual growth rate in the number of cruise passengers worldwide has been approximately 8%.

According to a Failte Ireland report published in 2012 entitled 'Cruise Tourism Report' there were 202 calls by cruise ships to Irish ports carrying 204,489 passengers and crew. Direct spend from passengers and crew who disembarked at Irish ports, including port charges, was estimated at €20.3 million.

The spend per passenger during their disembarkation varies and is very much dependent on location, attractions on offer and duration of stay. Failte Ireland Report notes that the average cruise tourist spend is of the order of € 71 per passenger, while embarking passengers spend considerably more. Expenditure by crew is also significant considering those that disembark spend an average of € 48.

Of passengers who disembark at Irish ports, 30% have made some form of advanced payment which covers their disembarked time in Ireland. The average prepayment made by these passengers was €116. A large proportion of the prepayment made covers transport (83%) and a tour guide (79%).

In addition to the above the opportunities to use the new harbour to attract maritime events to the West of Ireland is an opportunity that cannot be dismissed. The city has proven in the past the

¹ *Cruise Tourism to Ireland Research Report 2010 – Failte Ireland 31 Jan 2012*

economic benefit of hosting events such as the Volvo Ocean Race can make to a community and region, to be positioned to host future maritime events could be economically wise and prudent for Galway.

Finally, the development by government for offshore renewable energy comes at a time when Ireland strives to develop a sector which can offer sustainable growth in a green economy – this port development can work in partnership with such opportunities and through engagement with the various stakeholders this development can benefit not only the region as an economic driver but us, the people who live in the communities and villages of the west of Ireland.

Tourism businesses in Galway and the West of Ireland need this development to happen. We support it and strive for its attainment as we can clearly see how it will support an ever developing tourism product and tourism is a significant economic driver in this part of our island.

We would request the opportunity to speak at the oral hearings when they take place in Galway.

Yours sincerely,



Eimear Killian

President Skal Club of Galway

C/O. Brasserie on the Corner, Eglinton Street, Galway.

087 2173971

Enc €50

