



McGrath's Limestone (Cong) Ltd

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Dear Inspector,

We at McGraths Limestone would like to show our support for the recent planning application made by Galway Harbour Company to improve its shipping facilities by extending the harbour.

We are a customer of the port, commencing our export business in 2010 of Limestone grit, flour and bagged limestone. We presently export to Sweden, Estonia & Scotland and employ 55 people directly and up to 200 indirectly at our facility in Cong Co. Mayo.

The port in Galway has been an important springboard for our export business which is growing at 10% annually and recent enquiries we see additional new customers in mainland Europe in 2014-2015. Our current business projections see tonnages potentially growing to 300,000 tonnes over the next 10 years. We have carried out feasibility studies to determine if the limestone could be exported out of Sligo, Killybegs, Limerick and Foynes. It is uneconomic to export our limestone out of any other port than Galway. Our business enquiries need us to export in consignments of between 12,000 tonnes and 25,000 tonnes to the Nordic countries and we have considerable interest from the US at present from an existing customer but to make this feasible we need bigger vessel consignments.

However, the maximum vessel size Galway harbour can accommodate at present is 6000 tonnes due to insufficient depth of water, restrictions at the dockgate and delays to ships which must anchor while 'waiting for the tide'.

For our business to compete with our European competitors in terms of volume of export and shipping rates it is crucially important for us to export in larger consignments.

The extension of the harbour is critical to our business and for job creation in the region and we are currently planning to invest considerably in ship loading conveyors and storage warehouses in tandem with the harbour being extended.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Keith McGrath

