

Galway Harbour. U/T to forward copies.

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My name is John Brennan. I am the IBEC West Regional Director.

IBEC, both nationally and regionally, warmly endorses the proposed harbour extension and support its development.

IBEC is the national voice of business in Ireland promoting a positive climate for business and regional development. We represent some 7,500 member companies nationally, while, in the west region, we represent approximately xxx companies employing an estimated xxxx in total. Across sectors

As an island economy without a direct connection to the UK or mainland Europe, ports have a critical importance for economic sustainability and development. It is through our ports that most of our imports and exports flow. The Competition Authority estimates that sea-borne freight accounts for 84 per cent of Irish trade in volume and 62 per cent in value terms. Nationally, merchandise exports and imports were estimated to be worth some €158b in 2014 placing a value of almost €100 billion on trade through our ports.

Galway Port is a major regional port supporting some of the west region's major companies: companies such as Cold Chon, McGraths, Topaz, Murrays Timber and Barna Waste to name a few. These companies are also major employers.

Developing and expanding the harbour safeguards these jobs, maintains their competitiveness, improves efficiencies and allows the companies to grow and develop which will in turn generate further jobs and output.

A failure to develop the Port places those jobs in jeopardy as well as those companies supplying services and goods to those companies. Having to use alternative ports adds to transport costs, erodes competitiveness and increases carbon emissions.

The harbour extension also opens up opportunities for new businesses to import and export. For instance, the onshore and offshore sectors have been identified in many public reports, including the Government's own *Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan*, as business areas of high potential for the West coast and they are sectors which Galway Port has the capability of becoming a specialist service and supply centre should the extension take place. It is worth noting that the Port of Galway has already been involved in the import of wind farm equipment and has quoted for the import of more plant in 2015. I would also remind you that National Ports Policy endorses the potential for Galway Port as a location to service the Offshore Energy Sector.

Tourism is a major driver of the Irish economy and the cruise sector is well recognised as a major contributor to local economies from the spend of passengers and crew, providing welcome full-time and part-time jobs in the retail and hospitality sectors as have already been experienced from the many visiting cruise vessels that have come to Galway. The proposed harbour extension will facilitate a greater number of cruise vessels visit Galway as they will be able to tie up alongside the quay wall and not be forced to remain at anchor offshore. Further, the increasing size of cruise vessel requires improved facilities. Providing a warm welcome to our cruise visitors will encourage them return and spend a longer time with us, which is good for Galway and the region.

I wish to reiterate our warm welcome for the proposal to develop and expand the Port of Galway that will allow for 24 hour access and an ability to handle larger vessels. We believe that these proposals are sound and are necessary for the economic development of the region and for sustaining employment; they are appropriate and urgently required for the Port of Galway.

IBEC is therefore pleased to recommend that the proposed harbour extension should receive planning permission.

fully endorse & support.