McGrath's Limestone (Cong) Ltd

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AN BORD PLEANÁLA
TIME 12:15 BY McGRATH QUARRIES
22 JAN 2015
LTR-DATED JM FROM
PL PA0033

REF: 61.PA.0033

Inspector, ladies and gentlemen

My name is Keith McGrath and I am the Export Sales and Business Development Manager for our family business, McGrath Limestone (Cong) Ltd, which is based in Cong, Co mayo.

We have a very unique reserve of high purity limestone, at our quarry in Cong and we are presently developing export markets for our material throughout Europe and further afield.

We would like to express our support for the recent planning application made by Galway Harbour Company to improve Galway Port shipping facilities.

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

Our business is very important to this rural community in the West of Ireland which, apart from tourism and other minor industries, has little or no employment prospects.

The Port in Galway has been an important springboard for our export business which is now growing at rate of 10% annually and in addition recent enquiries suggest that new customers and markets will be won in mainland Europe in 2015-2016. Our current business projections see tonnages potentially growing to 300,000 tons per annum over the next 10 years.

We have carried out feasibility studies to determine if our limestone products could be exported from other Ports including Sligo, Killybegs, Limerick and Foynes and we have found that it would be uneconomic to export our material from any Port other than Galway.

Our present business enquiries require us to export in shipping consignments of between 12,000 tons and 20,000 tons to the Nordic countries and we also have expressions of interest to ship our material to the USA but to make this feasible we need larger shipping 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 off shore while 'waiting for the tide'.

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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 much larger consignments.

The extension of the harbour is critical to the growth of our business and development of export markets from our base in the West of Ireland and we believe that the development of the Port will stimulate creation of additional industries and job creation in the region.

Based on the Galway Harbour Board proposed development we are currently planning to invest considerably in ship loading conveyors, storage warehouses and ancillary dock facilities in tandem with the Harbour extended.

Thank you for your time.