



Topaz House,  
Beech Hill, Clonskeagh,  
Dublin 4, Ireland.

T + 353 (0)1 202 8888  
F + 353 (0)1 203 9888  
W [www.topaz.ie](http://www.topaz.ie)

## **Topaz submission to An Bord Pleanála Oral hearing**

### **An Bord Pleanála Reference PL61.PA0033**

### **Proposed Galway Harbour Expansion**

**22<sup>nd</sup> January 2015**

My name is Jonathan Preston and I am Property Development Manager for Topaz Energy Limited ('Topaz'). I am here today on behalf of Topaz to present our position on the proposed Galway Harbour Expansion by Port of Galway, the subject of this Oral Hearing.

Galway Harbour is a very important and strategic hub for Topaz in the importation, storage and distribution of fuel for the western regions of Ireland.

As an employer and oil terminal operator in Galway Harbour, Topaz welcomes and wholeheartedly supports the proposed expansion of the Port facilities.

Topaz is the leading supplier of fuels in the Irish market. It is the number one importer of fuel products with the largest terminal infrastructure, which includes the strategic Galway Harbour facility. These vital infrastructures give us the ability to service our customers in all locations across the country, including the important Western regions.

Topaz prides itself in having a long-standing history with its customers and its distributors, providing a professional service locally. At Topaz, Health, Safety and Environment Management are also front and foremost in everything that we do. Appropriate and efficient working facilities therefore have a very large part to play in the continued success and development of our commercial business.

Port of Galway's plans for the relocation and harbour expansion development seek to create a new port facility to serve Galway and the Western region and to replace the existing port at the Inner Harbour in Galway. Topaz strongly supports the further development of the Harbour area which it sees as critically important for the sustainable future of the Port trade and its businesses.

Topaz is of the view that the proposed plans are in accordance with the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport's National Ports Policy 2013. Topaz is of the view that the plans are also in accordance with the policies of the Galway City Development Plan 2011 – 2017.

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Topaz has had a presence in the Harbour since the company was formed in 2006 and in total for almost 45 years when the Shell and Statoil businesses which it acquired are included. The Harbour plays a vital role in our business in the Western region and its success will be critically important for the future.

Topaz currently employs 11 people directly in Galway Harbour, with over 100 drivers per day drawing product from its terminal and utilising its facilities. On this basis we believe we have a very firm understanding of the Harbour's challenges, its potential and its requirements for future development of services.

There is no doubt that the planned expansion will greatly enhance and improve the existing port facilities with the likely impact of consolidating activities, enhancing accessibility to port facilities, improving oil import and distribution economics and thereby enhancing opportunities to generate additional business and employment for the area.

In conclusion and for the information of the Board, Topaz welcomes this proposal and strongly supports the further development of the Harbour area which we see as critically important for the future success of the Port, Galway City, the surrounding region and Topaz's Western fuel operations.

