

Better Energy Launch
Opening Remarks
Minister Rabbitte
11th May 2011
(Check Against Delivery)

This morning's announcement is an element of the Government's Jobs Initiative announced by Minister Noonan in the Dáil yesterday evening. The Government's decision to boost the funding for energy conservation measures is recognition of both the real value for money and the speedy results that can be achieved by spending in this area.

- *Better Energy* is a major step forward in this Government's retrofitting programme. Implementing our Programme for Government commitments, I am pleased to announce today:
 - An additional €30M in Government funding in 2011
 - The streamlining of programmes to offer a more accessible experience for consumers
 - The involvement of the energy companies as partners in delivering energy savings
 - The start of the process of moving to new financial models such as pay as you save
- We all acknowledge that the recent financial crisis has shifted priorities for everyone. Given energy price trends and growing concerns over security of supply, the way we use energy is no longer simply a question of environmental responsibility but one of economic necessity.
- Minister Noonan announced yesterday that a further €30 million is being allocated to the programme for 2011, which I am pleased to say will help create a further 2,000 jobs in 2011, on top of the 3,800 jobs already supported by the existing budget allocation.
- The additional €30 million will be matched by a further €30 million in private sector investment, helping to generate further economic activity of at least €60 million this year.
- The Home Energy Savings (HES) scheme, the Greener Homes Scheme (GHS) and the Warmer Homes Scheme (WHS) have delivered savings, built markets and improved quality of efficiency services.
- Not only do these programmes have considerable positive societal and environmental benefits, but they are also labour intensive activities that greatly contribute to labour retention and activation.
- However, as successful as they have been, we need to get bigger and more ambitious to drive the market growth and energy savings our economy needs today. For this reason, Better Energy will take a different approach – one that

will prove more attractive to homeowners, energy suppliers and providers of efficiency technologies.

Economy/Jobs

- There is great potential within every home, business and industry in Ireland to achieve significant financial savings through the installation of energy efficiency measures.
- Every euro spent by homeowners and businesses on energy efficiency, not only brings about long term energy savings, but also helps support jobs and indigenous companies.
- Ireland needs a strong green building sector, founded upon sustainable principles. *Better Energy* will help drive this agenda by building upon existing successful domestic grant programmes to take the scale of activity to a new level and in the process reward and incentivise efficiency and innovation.
- *Better Energy* represents an important milestone in the achievement of our national 20% energy saving target. The existing National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP), which will be updated this year, identifies a gap to target of approximately 8,000GWh, which effectively represents a distance to target of a quarter of the 20% national target. *Better Energy* is designed to be the main programme that will bridge the gap between now and 2020.

Energy Suppliers contribution

- *Better Energy* envisages the active involvement of energy supply companies, energy services providers and the construction sector; all of whom need to work together in order to ensure the energy and cost savings are delivered.
- I am happy to announce that we will be working in partnership with 25 energy suppliers to deliver this programme, and I commend their engagement to date. Here today we have: Pdraig McManus, Chief Executive of ESB; John Mullins, Chief Executive of Bord Gais; Gabriel D'Arcy, Managing Director of Bord na Mona and Stephen Wheeler, Managing Director of Airtricity, who will be available to tell you about their individual company schemes.

What Better Energy means

- The press pack we have prepared for you today will give you a clear idea of the energy savings realisable in the average Irish home...
- On a final note, I would like to reiterate that this programme has the potential to improve the way we use energy as a nation, creating saving for homes and business alike, and attracting investment to our secure, sustainable and competitive economy.

