

May 2005

Mr. Sean Griffin
Energy Planning Division
Department of the Communications, Marine,
& Natural Resources
Dublin 2.

Re: Energy Research, Development and Demonstration
Consultation Paper

Dear Mr. Griffin,

I have been asked by the Secretary General to refer to your recent letter regarding the April 2005 *Consultation Paper on Energy Research, Development and Demonstration* published by the Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources.

This Department welcomes the publication of the consultation paper and supports its objectives, particularly on the need to take a longer term outlook in relation to energy policy. The initiative is both timely and valuable in the context of the ongoing review of the National Climate Change Strategy.

This Department agrees with the aim of ensuring that energy use is environmentally sustainable, and that this aim is indeed a key issue in the challenges and choices on energy policy over the next decade and beyond. The focus in the consultation paper on linkages and synergies between energy and environmental policy is both appropriate and important, particularly on the lowering of carbon and other emissions for the purpose of meeting national commitments under EU and international law. Against this background, this Department would urge continuation of a focus on environmental issues in any new approach to prioritising research activities.

On the issue of Institutional and Governance Options, the option of an energy research agency is attractive but given the need to establish such a structure quickly, the Department agrees that the option of an energy research coordination council could meet the need for more effective national coordination of R, D & D. However, it is important that adequate

resources be provided to service such a body. The body should also provide a leadership role as well as a coordinating role. The Department agrees on the need to maintain an appropriate balance between technical and policy research and that in general R, D & D should have policy relevance.

On the specific issue of links with the environment and the question raised in section 6 of the consultation paper, this Department understands that the Environmental Protection Agency has submitted a response on energy and environmental synergies, including information on energy related research under its Research, Technology, Development and Innovation (RTDI) programme. The element of collaboration on research that already exists and should be strengthened in order better to inform the development of national energy and environmental policy, as well as Irish participation in related EU and international business.

An area of particular policy relevance is the need to develop analytical capacity to provide for scenario planning of energy use across the economy into the medium and longer term. Such energy use includes transport and industry and scenario analysis could develop more national energy modelling capabilities to devise alternative ('with/without' measures) scenarios to inform energy policy for the Kyoto period and beyond within the three pillars of security of supply, competitiveness and environment.

This Department is prepared to work with your Department in developing and progressing the energy research programme in the light of the responses to the consultation paper.

Yours sincerely,

Owen Ryan
Principal
Air / Climate Section