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Co. Laois

Online at cdp@laoiscoco.ie

2nd March 2020

RE: Review of County Development Plan

A Chara,

Statkraft Ireland Limited (Statkraft Ireland) welcomes the opportunity to make this submission to Laois County Council (LCC) on the notice of the stage one review of the Laois County Development Plan (LCDP) 2017-2023. This submission has been prepared pursuant to the public notice inviting written observations and comments from interested parties.

Statkraft Ireland is part of the Statkraft group. Statkraft is a leading company in hydropower internationally Europe's largest generator of renewable energy. The Group produces hydropower, wind power, solar power, gas-fired power and supplies district heating. Statkraft is a global company in energy market operations. Statkraft has 3600 employees in 15 countries. As a Norwegian state-owned utility, Statkraft is a solid, dependable partner, committed to playing a leading role in the Irish Energy Market.

Statkraft Ireland develops, owns and operates renewable production facilities and is also involved in the trading and origination of power from our own projects and those of third parties. Statkraft Ireland's aim is to play a significant role in Ireland's transition to becoming a low carbon economy.

As a member of the Irish Wind Energy Association (IWEA), Statkraft Ireland supports the IWEA response to this consultation process and would like to highlight that each Local Authority has a part of play in Ireland's Future climate ambitions and central to this – achieving 70% renewable electricity by 2030.

All counties, including Laois have an opportunity now to embrace the transition to a low carbon society. Renewable electricity can play a leading role in the sustainable development of the county in the coming decades. Embracing the development of all forms of renewable electricity will lead to a better quality of life for the people of Laois in the decades to come. This is not only through the County delivering effective climate action and tackling the potentially catastrophic effects that we are advised that climate change will have if not addressed, but also in delivering millions of euros to

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local communities which would assist the people of County Laois in adopting low carbon solutions and also developing the sustainability of rural living.

If a supportive CDP led the development of 150 or 200MW of suitable and appropriate wind energy projects over the term of its plan, this would result in a community benefit of €10 to €15million euro [taking €5k/MW for 15 years and multiplying by 85% to reflect the % of MW the DCCAIE see going through RESS] for local communities along with rates for the council in the order of €30 to €40million over the lifetime of those developments.

Onshore wind developments have an extremely important role to play in the development of any viable and sustainable renewable energy mix and this needs to be supported by LCC.

In the Pre-Draft Issues paper released, LCC have asked *“should the Plan give positive support to the development of renewable energy at the expense of other considerations?”* SK believe it is imperative that LCC give positive support to renewable energy, specifically wind energy development. It is inexcusable, considering the current and real global climate crisis, not to contribute towards our national climate action targets.

There is no reference or commitment to producing a Renewable Energy Strategy for the County within the Issues Paper. Statkraft believe that this is in conflict with the National Planning Framework (NPF) and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES).

Currently there are only 21MWs of installed wind energy developments within County Laois. This equates to approximately 0.51% of the overall installed wind energy capacity in the Republic of Ireland.

LCC needs to be a more active player in the development of clean energy and reducing carbon and should share this responsibility with other Counties who are and have been facilitating wind energy developments for the past number of decades.

All departments within LCC need to be made aware of our targets under the Climate Action Plan (CAP) and understand their role in achieving these targets. It is imperative that there is joined up thinking between departments in relation to wind energy development and its objectives to tackle climate change.

Statkraft believe that zoning of areas for wind energy development should be based on technical constraints analysis, planners input, and public consultation such as this process, and should not be un-duly influenced by Local Authority members.

Statkraft Ireland is committed to developing suitable and appropriate renewable energy projects in line with the CAP and climate emergency. LCC has a responsibility to offer developers every opportunity to bring forward projects that can deliver climate action.

Statkraft Ireland are committed to working with LCC and all Local Authorities, Government bodies and the public to deliver renewable energy projects that will deliver climate action and that are

suitable and appropriate in the local context, certainty from LCC around what is appropriate within Co. Laois, would support this development.

Statkraft Ireland would urge LCC to carry out a full re-assessment of the County for Wind Energy Potential as a matter of urgency in line with recent policy changes and as set out in the IWEA submission to this consultation.

Mise le Meas,



Alice Power

Assistant Project Manager, ENIP

