

# CCBS – LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

---

26 January 2018 – 2 February 2018



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

The Northern Ireland Assembly was dissolved at 00:01 on Thursday 26 January 2017.



Wednesday 31 January 2018

Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment

Peadar Toibin Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment if the North-South interconnector is to proceed, if EirGrid will have permission to enter farmers' lands against their will to erect the pylons; if so, the basis on which it has the right to do same; if the cost of dealing with the likely civil disobedience that will be generated from this action has been factored in; and if so, the estimated cost of same.

**Denis Naughten:** On 21 December 2016 An Bord Pleanála granted planning permission for the North-South Interconnector project in Ireland. The decision concluded a lengthy planning process which included an Oral Hearing completed over eleven weeks from March to May of 2016. On 23 January 2018, full planning permission was also granted for the section of the line that lies in Northern Ireland. Following these decisions, and the conclusion of a number of judicial review proceedings relating to the decision in Ireland, EirGrid will continue to move to the next planned phased in the project. This is an operational matter for EirGrid and ESB Networks and I therefore have no function.

Following the decision of An Bord Pleanála to approve the interconnector, I met with the local opposition groups and members of the Oireachtas in Leinster House on 8 February 2017 to listen to concerns they had.

Following this, motions calling for an updated independent study were passed by Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann respectively. I have commissioned two independent studies designed to address the main points of the motions as well as key concerns expressed by parties opposed to the development of an overhead line.

The first is to examine the technical feasibility and cost of undergrounding the project. In the development of the terms of reference for this study, my officials met with the local opposition groups to get their views on the focus of the study. The study began in August 2017 and its results are expected this quarter.

The second study is focused on the compensation provided to land and property owners in proximity to high-voltage transmission lines in a European context. The results of this study are also expected this quarter. Both reports will be published and available to all parties concerned.

**Source:** <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2018-01-31a.537&s=north-south+2018-01-26..2018-02-02>

**Thursday 1 February 2018**

**Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport**

Declan Breathnach asked Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if the planning permission for the proposed Narrow Water bridge is still valid and effective; the communication he has had with the Department for Infrastructure in Northern Ireland and with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council on the project; if funding will be made available for the project; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

**Shane Ross:** Under Section E of the Fresh Start Agreement of the 17 November 2015, the then Northern Ireland Executive and the Irish Government agreed to undertake a review of the proposed Narrow Water Bridge project with a view to identifying options for its future development, for consideration by the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC). In this context, following on from consultation with stakeholders, an options paper has been under preparation in relation to a bridge at Narrow Water.

I understand that when the various options have been further developed it is intended to engage in some further stakeholder consultation and it is intended that this will commence shortly.

In the absence of the Northern Ireland Executive the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) cannot meet but it is envisaged that the options paper will be considered once the NSMC is reconvened.

I have no role in relation to the planning status of the previous proposal for a bridge at Narrow Water and this is a matter for the relevant authorities.

Source: <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2018-02-01a.793&s=north-south+2018-01-26..2018-02-02#g795.r>