**Gas tariff concerns post Brexit makes Ballylongford LNG terminal a priority again – Shannon Foynes Port Company briefing hears**

***Ireland will become the most vulnerable of the 28 EU nations post Brexit in terms of gas supply – MEP Sean Kelly***

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**Thursday 16 March 2017:**   Plans to develop a €500m liquefied natural gas plant in Co. Kerry must be rebooted if Ireland is to avoid becoming the EU’s most vulnerable energy nation post-Brexit, a Shannon Foynes Port Company (SFPC) briefing has heard.

Speaking following a meeting with MEP Sean Kelly at the company’s headquarters in Foynes (see video), SFPC CEO Pat Keating said that concerns of post-Brexit tariffs on gas piped here through the interconnector from the UK must put the Ballylongford project back at the top of the Government’s energy supply agenda.

Before the Corrib field went into production 96% of Ireland’s gas supply came through the interconnector, which will again be the fall-back when Corrib levels start to naturally decline in 2020. The Shannon LNG plant has the capacity to supply all of the nation’s gas requirements.

“Why the Shannon LNG project has not come to fruition is baffling considering its importance in terms of energy security and the significance of the investment for north Kerry.  This is a project that so many people want. It is important from a local perspective because of employment; 600 to 700 employed in construction, 50 full time and probably many more than that in indirect employment.

“It would be capable of supplying all of the nation’s gas requirements and given the current dependency on the interconnector and that the Corrib gas pipeline has a limited window, then the LNG plant in Ballylongford must be put at the top of the agenda again as a matter of urgency.”

Speaking after the briefing with Shannon Foynes Port Company, Munster MEP Sean Kelly that Ireland’s energy security post-Brexit needs to be given serious consideration.  “We are currently dependent on an interconnector from Scotland and given that increasing levels of the UK’s gas is also imported, realising the Ballylongford project is not just an option, it is becoming an imperative.

“We’re actually by far and away the most vulnerable of all the 28 member states in the European Union now. The countries that are vulnerable in terms of energy requirements across the EU are well advanced on plans to sort that out by building their own energy terminals but we’re not doing that.

“This is almost unbelievable given we have a project here in North Kerry that ticks all the boxes. It has all the necessary planning permissions in place, which means it can be fast-tracked, and is, therefore, very attractive to investors.  But we need to create the proper regulatory and operating framework for this to happen.

“Shannon LNG is the best solution available to us post-Brexit from a supply security perspective. It is an EU Project of Common Interest (PCI) and has been identified by the European Commission as a vital part of the EU security of gas supply strategy; therefore, it will be important to ensure that the current national regulatory barriers are addressed to reflect the importance that EU policymakers have given to the project. This will send the right signal to investors.

“Whatever needs to be done to make this project happen should be done, for the sake of jobs and investment in this region and for the sake of the nation’s energy security. Finally, I would like to welcome the recent positive comments by Minister David Naughten on the need for options, including the Shannon LNG terminal, to be explored and supported to reduce our energy dependence on Britain,” said MEP Kelly.

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