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Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
Opening address to the Joint Committee on Transport and Communications
Wednesday 13 July 2022

Chairperson and Joint Committee members, thank you for the invitation to attend the meeting today to discuss the Government's draft Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy.

I am joined today by my colleague;

- Graham Brennan, Programme Manager, EV Policy and Charging Infrastructure

I would like to thank the Committee for affording me the opportunity to present my opening statement.

Introduction

The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) is at the forefront of delivering Ireland's energy revolution. We are funded by the Government of Ireland, through the Department of the Environment, Climate, and Communications (DECC), and the Department of Transport. We have had a major transformative impact on the Irish economy, and in the last decade our actions have underpinned more than €1.2 billion in energy savings.

We are catalysts for action through our grant and incentive programmes, and through our capacity-building processes. Citizens, communities, businesses, and other stakeholders are at the heart of everything we deliver.

Role of SEAI and the Transport sector energy transition

Transport is the single largest source of energy-related emissions in Ireland, representing around 40% of energy-related emissions, equivalent to around 20% of all greenhouse gas emissions. While this temporarily reduced during the Covid-19 pandemic, it has since rebounded to pre-pandemic levels even despite the dramatic fuel price increases in recent months. The majority of transport emissions come from road transport (approximately 50% private car users and 25% freight and

commercial fleets) which is difficult to decarbonise due to the dominance of the combustion engine and its associated fuel supply infrastructure.

Since 2011 SEAI have actively promoted the purchase of EVs (including BEVs and PHEVs but excluding HEVs) and associated charging infrastructure in Ireland. Today we have over 60,000 EVs on our roads representing about 2.7% of our car fleet total. In terms of annual sales rates, EVs have grown massively in 2022 representing 21% (one in five) of all new car sales, which is up from 13% for the same period last year. Demand for EVs is high all across the EU and UK with waiting lists of six months not uncommon for prospective car buyers. For Ireland to reach its target of 845,000 passenger EV cars on our roads by 2030 (representing approximately 40% of car fleet), then the EV sales rate will need to reach 100% of all new cars before the end of the decade. This will require determined investment in public charging infrastructure and efforts to provide charging to those more difficult locations, such as on-street, apartment, or Multi-Unit Development type locations. SEAI therefore welcome the publication of the draft EV Charging Infrastructure Strategy by the Department of Transport.

We are providing insights and expertise to our colleagues in Department of Transport to assist the development of the Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy and look forward to the finalisation and delivery of this strategy as a key part of the overall shift to zero emission transport. Adequate infrastructure is a key enabler of EV uptake in Ireland and can ensure that all vehicle users can complete their necessary journeys with confidence. Infrastructure must be installed across a range of locations including private, commercial, and public sites, and involves a range of parties including planners, electricity operators and IT systems. The Strategy aims to bring these interests together under one roof within the new Zero Emission Vehicles Ireland collaborative initiative under the Department of Transport. SEAI is pleased to continue to provide its expertise and services to this group in order to deliver on the Climate Action Plan.

SEAI's work supports the delivery of the Climate Action Plan (CAP) and Ireland's emissions targets, including transport actions to support businesses, the public sector, and citizens and communities on their transition to low emission transport solutions. SEAI's work is integral to the achievement of major targets and policy objectives, and includes:

- Promoting EV uptake towards the national EV target by 2030 via grant support for private and commercial vehicles, information supports, interactive comparator tools, fleet guidance, dealer training and awards, transport energy awards, behavioural change campaigns, and EV fleet trials. This target is currently the largest contribution to transport

emission reduction in Climate Action Plan 2021, with a projected 3.2 MtCO₂ attributed to this target.

- Promoting vehicle charging solutions availability for homes, businesses and public bodies via grant support for home chargers, apartment chargers, local authority chargers, destination and community-based chargers.
- Supporting public transport fleet (public transport, local authorities and other public sector vehicle fleets) efficiency and emission reduction through our public sector programmes and supporting business fleet electrification via guidance, case studies and grant support for vehicles and charging.
- Supporting community low emission transport initiatives via our Sustainable Energy Community network and Community Energy Grants.
- SEAI were a leading state agency supporting the work of the Low Emission Vehicle Task Force which published numerous reports on key activities to drive LEV adoption in Ireland.
- SEAI are also a member of the Electric Vehicle Policy Pathway Working Group which presented its report to Government in 2021. As part of this group the SEAI Behavioural Economics team completed a study which outlined the EV customer journey and identified the barriers to be addressed, many of which have been actioned since the report was presented to Government.
- Delivering state of the art energy modelling, policy analysis and advice, and collating national energy statistics.
- Driving and supporting national energy research to support innovative research and development activities in support of national emission reduction targets.

Conclusion

We passionately believe the clean energy transition must happen urgently; and we stand ready to support all of Irish society on this journey. EVs offer one of the most promising and accessible options for reducing tail pipe emissions from road vehicles. Importantly, with an ambition and capability of producing 80% of our electricity from our own renewable energy resources, we have the opportunity of removing our dependence on imported energy and stabilising our own transport energy costs into the future. Electrifying the transport fleet will complement the growth

in renewable electricity by providing a mechanism to store the electricity and eventually provide electricity back to the network to provide support to the network when needed.

To operate the number of EVs desired by 2030 will require comprehensive and reliable charging infrastructure options, and importantly will require intelligent management of vehicle charging via the home via a "Smart Grid". SEAI is ready to support the deployment of this infrastructure, develop new tools and methods to maximise this opportunity and carefully guide the public with the necessary information to make their change to EV go as smoothly as possible.

Our thanks to our colleagues in the Department of Transport for their support for our Transport programmes and close collaboration.

I welcome discussion with the Committee, and my colleagues and I are happy to answer any questions you may wish to raise.

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