



Press Release

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Local TD Alan Kelly and Tipperary County Councillor Fiona Bonfield welcome the community opportunities created by the Silvermines green energy project.

On Thursday 16.05.24, Labour TD Alan Kelly and Tipperary County Councillor Fiona Bonfield paid a visit to the offices of Silvermines Hydro in Nenagh, to find out more about the opportunities for the local community that will be generated as part of a hydroelectric pump station project in Silvermines.

The project is officially designated as a European Project of Common Interest (“PCI”) and holds national significance. The project will involve repurposing a disused mine site and will add in excess of 1.8GWh of flexible daily storage capacity to the grid.

Currently in the design and pre-planning stage, this multi-million-euro project will create a hydroelectric power station that will transform the long disused former mining site at Magcobar, into one of Ireland’s leading green energy facilities. Pumped Hydro technology is dependable and proven way to store energy and generate electricity.

The 148-hectare site is located in Tipperary on the Northern ridge of the Silvermines Mountain range. The project will utilise the existing void to create a lower reservoir and see the creation of a second, upper reservoir just below the crest of the hilltop.

The project will be able to vary loads and to rapidly switch between import and export modes with high round trip efficiency, thereby allowing access to a range of ancillary grid support services as well as traditional load shifting. The project will play an essential role in balancing the grid and will play its part in reducing Ireland’s fossil fuel dependency and allowing the integration of more variable renewable generation on the grid.

The project will create job opportunities in the region and deliver significant environmental benefits. The project is well supported on a local and national level, having been identified in Ireland’s “Review of the Security of Energy Supply of

Ireland's Electricity and Natural Gas Systems" as a mitigating solution to Ireland's energy challenges.

The project was given significant support in 2023. First, when The European Climate Innovation and Networks Executive Agency (CINEA) awarded Silvermines Hydro a substantial grant of €4.3 million and secondly, when Foresight Energy Infrastructure Partners, Foresight Group's energy transition fund, announced an investment into the Silvermines project.

As part of the planning process a programme of events planned for later in the year will provide opportunities for the community to participate in the detailed planning of the project.

Project Manager and Heritage Officer Greg Finnegan said:

Collaborating with the local community on a project of such significance is key to its success. There is a fascinating heritage and environment at Silvermines that we want to capture and ensure is reflected across the wider project.

With dedicated Heritage Officer, Greg Finnegan at the helm, work has begun on gathering the stories of Silvermines, from those that tell of the lives of the miners that worked the Magcobar and Mogel sites, to the history of mining going back, perhaps, as far as the Bronze Age.

Tipperary Labour Party Councillor Fiona Bonfield said:

Projects such as this are once in a lifetime opportunity for local communities. Silvermines Hydro will not only advance Ireland's renewable energy future, but it will also create a rich tourism and heritage for the local community. The opportunities that will come from the realisation of Silvermines Hydro are immense and will boost the local economy significantly. I am pleased to see the heritage of Silvermines playing a significant role, ensuring this rich history is preserved and I am excited to see how the project progresses.

Laura McSherry, the Community Liaison Officer, is leading the community participation program, expressed:

With strong community ties in the Nenagh community, this project holds personal significance for me. I'm dedicated to bridging the gap between the public and introducing the project to the people of Silvermines. I am readily available for meetings and discussions and look to hearing from people as part of our community activities later this year.

The community participation programme is currently scheduled to begin in the Autumn.

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