

## Cullinane critical of Taoiseach's claims on pylons



Senator David Cullinane has criticised Taoiseach Enda Kenny's reference to emigration in an attempt to justify the EirGrid pylon project.

"To justify a project, that is seriously lacking in credibility, by linking it to emigration and unemployment is a cynical means of distracting from the issues surrounding EirGrid," said the Sinn Féin representative.

"Frankly, the Taoiseach is exploiting the jobs and emigration crisis as part of a PR exercise for pylons.

"While any opportunity to provide employment should be welcomed, the reality is that a network of pylons is not a genuine solution to the level of unemployment that produces the mass emigration that we are currently experiencing. That is just spin."

Senator Cullinane added: "In relation to the jobs and emigration crisis, we need an actual and holistic jobs creation strategy. The document that this government presented shortly before Christmas was not a jobs creation strategy. It was a strategy for deficit reduction.

"The EirGrid project needs to be critically analysed. Any such analysis would see the clear need for the carrying out of an independent cost-benefit analysis on undergrounding. It would also show that EirGrid's communications strategy up to this point has been centred on glossy presentations, nuanced positions and spin. That has served to compound problems and exacerbate the fears of communities

"The Taoiseach's comments are simply an extension of this strategy. The arguments for pylons lack substance as they are grounded in a short-term perspective and they marginalise the concerns of the affected communities.

"EirGrid, Minister Rabbitte and the Taoiseach cannot pretend that these concerns do exist or that they are not substantial. The glaring need for an independent cost benefit analysis will not go away. Until that need is fulfilled, neither will the credibility issues for this project." (See News 22 for more).