PRESS RELEASE

Electricity emissions fell as the national grid became coal-free in June 2025 and net electricity imports continued to rise. However, with limited additional renewable capacity being added this leaves Ireland unnecessarily dependent on imported fossil fuels and exposed to global energy shocks, Climate Change Advisory Council Annual Review reveals

13th May 2026: Ongoing instability in global energy markets continues to expose Ireland to fossil fuel price volatility and supply risks. This reinforces the importance and urgency of Government delivering on their Programme for Government commitment to end Ireland's reliance on fossil fuels by accelerating the transition to secure, domestically generated renewable electricity.

The Council warns that Ireland's electricity system is failing to keep pace with the energy transition. Around 10% of available renewable electricity could not be used last year due to grid constraints and curtailment, the highest rate since records began in 2016. In addition, just 0.8GW of new wind and solar capacity was added, far below the approximately 2GW now needed every year to meet 2030 Climate Action Plan targets. The Council warns that this slow pace of renewable delivery and grid reinforcement is leaving Ireland unnecessarily dependent on imported fossil fuels and exposed to global energy shocks, including market volatility linked to conflict in the Middle East.

The Council is calling for urgent action to accelerate renewable electricity delivery, particularly onshore wind and solar. It says the Critical Infrastructure Bill must designate electricity grid reinforcement projects for prioritised delivery – with clear timelines, accountability and transparency – and must not remove the climate obligations that apply to all public bodies under Irish law. The Council also says Regional Renewable Energy Strategies, which translate national targets into county-level plans, must be adopted by the end of 2026.

Ireland now has the highest household electricity prices in the European Union with 319,000 households in arrears on their electricity bills. This underlines the need for targeted energy supports for households most exposed to energy poverty, rather than relying on broad subsidies that do not address the underlying causes of high energy costs.

Although early data indicates that electricity emissions fell by approximately 8.9% in 2025, the Review finds that the underlying risks remain significant. Net electricity imports accounted for 17.3% of supply in 2025, while data centre electricity demand has grown from 5% to more than 20% since 2015.

Renewable electricity is already helping to protect Irish households and businesses by reducing wholesale electricity prices. In 2025, Ireland had the second highest prices in Western Europe. However, prices in March 2026 fell to an average of €94/MWh on the days with the most wind energy and doubling to €179/MWh when the system was forced to rely on expensive imported fossil fuels. These figures show the direct link between renewable electricity, energy affordability and fossil fuel dependence. Strengthening Ireland's electricity infrastructure and accelerating renewable energy delivery are essential to reducing wasted renewable electricity and tackling the underlying causes of high and volatile energy costs.

The report also warns that Ireland's electricity system must be better prepared for extreme weather. Storm Éowyn left 768,000 customers without power – with some homes off the grid for 18 days – and triggered failures across water supply, telecommunications and health services. The Council says electricity resilience must now be treated as a core element of national climate adaptation planning, with investment in backup power solutions and electricity infrastructure needed to ensure the Electricity sector can better withstand future extreme weather events.

Alex White, Chairperson of the Climate Change Advisory Council, said:

"We know renewable energy helps to reduce wholesale electricity prices, but Irish households and businesses will not feel the full benefit unless we build the grid, storage and capacity needed to use that power. Every year of delay leaves Ireland more exposed to imported fossil fuels, volatile global markets and avoidable costs."

"Storm Éowyn showed how vulnerable our electricity system, essential services and communities remain to extreme weather. Electricity resilience must be central to national climate adaptation planning, with clear responsibility, investment and delivery."

"The Government has set the right ambition to end Ireland's reliance on fossil fuels. The test now is delivery. Critical grid projects must be prioritised, renewable planning must be accelerated, and the benefits of clean electricity must reach Irish households and business to ensure energy security and affordability for all."

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If you have any questions or are seeking further comment, please do not hesitate to contact:

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The Climate Change Advisory Council will publish Sectoral Reviews throughout the year. The publication schedule below is subject to change and indicative only:

Chapter	Published
Our Changing Climate	Published 1st April 2026
Electricity	Published 13th May 2026
Transport	Mid June 2026
Built Environment	End July 2026
Agriculture, Forestry and Land Use (AFOLU)	Early September 2026
Preparing for Ireland's Changing Climate	End September 2026
Industry and Waste	Mid October 2026
Biodiversity	End October 2026
Cross Sectoral	Mid November 2026
Irish Translation of Summary document	Mid November 2026