



An Bille um Chomhionannas Tuaithe, 2015
Rural Equality Bill 2015

Mar a tionscnaíodh

As initiated



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AN BILLE UM CHOMHIONANNAS TUAITHE, 2015
RURAL EQUALITY BILL 2015

Bill

entitled

An Act to provide that regard be had by public bodies to the desirability of reducing socio-economic and other inequalities suffered by those in rural Ireland, to provide for the carrying out of rural impact assessments in respect of measures that are likely to have a significant socio-economic impact or effect on rural Ireland and to provide for related matters. 5

Be it enacted by the Oireachtas as follows: 10

Interpretation

1. In this Act—

“public body” includes any person or body established by law and through which any of the legislative executive powers of the State are exercised, other than the President;

“measure” includes any enactment and any executive decision, designation, determination, policy, requirement, specification or other act of an equivalent effect made by a public body and, for the avoidance of doubt, includes enactments in a Money Bill within the meaning of Bunreacht na hÉireann; 15

“Minister” means the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

Rural Impact Assessments 20

2. (1) A public body shall before the end of the period of six months beginning with the commencement of this Act or, if later, from the establishment of the public body, submit a rural impact scheme to the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine.
- (2) Where the Minister considers appropriate he or she may request any public body to make a revised scheme. 25
- (3) A scheme shall show how the public body proposes to fulfil the duties imposed by *section 3*.
- (4) A scheme shall state, in particular, the public body’s arrangements—
- (a) for assessing and consulting on the likely socio-economic impact of a measure adopted or proposed to be adopted by the public body on rural Ireland, 30
 - (b) for monitoring any adverse socio-economic impact of a measure adopted by the

public body on rural Ireland,	
(c) for assessing the socio-economic impact of a measure on rural Ireland, or on the elimination or lessening of existing discrimination of rural Ireland,	
(d) for publishing the results of such assessments carried out under this section,	
(e) for training staff,	5
(f) for ensuring and assessing public access to information and to services provided by the public body,	
(g) for carrying out a rural impact assessment for a measure or proposed measure which has or is likely to have a significant impact on the socio economic position of rural communities.	10
(5) A scheme shall—	
(a) conform to any guideline as to form or content which are issued by the Minister,	
(b) specify a timetable for measures proposed in the scheme, and	
(c) include details of how it will be published.	
(6) Before submitting a scheme a public body shall consult, in accordance with any directions given by the Minister—	15
(a) representatives of persons likely to be affected by the scheme, and	
(b) such other persons as may be specified in the directions.	
(7) On receipt of a scheme the Minister shall—	
(a) approve it, with or without modification, or	20
(b) request the public body to make a revised scheme.	
(8) If a public body wishes to revise a scheme it may submit a revised scheme to the Minister.	
(9) A public body shall submit to the Minister for review an annual report on the operation and performance of the scheme.	25
(10) A public body shall, before the end of the period of five years beginning with the submission of its current scheme, or the latest review of that scheme under this section, whichever is the later, review that scheme and inform the Minister of the outcome of the review.	
Duties arising out of Rural Impact schemes	30
3. In publishing the results of a rural impact assessment, a public body shall state the aims of the measure to which the assessment relates and give details of any consideration given by the body to—	
(a) measures which might mitigate any adverse socio-economic impact of that measure on rural Ireland, and	35
(b) an alternative measure which might better achieve the aim of reducing the socio-economic and other inequalities suffered by those in rural Ireland.	

Guidelines

4. (1) The Minister shall, as soon as practicable after the commencement day, publish guidelines to be complied with by public bodies in respect of the duties imposed on public bodies by this Act and for the purposes of obtaining approval from the Minister for a scheme under *section 2*. 5
- (2) The Minister shall publish the guidelines under *subsection (1)* in such form and manner as he or she thinks appropriate (including on the internet) specifying the date on which the guideline shall come into operation.
- (3) The Minister may amend or revoke guidelines established under *subsection (1)*.
- (4) Without prejudice to the generality of *subsection (1)*, guidelines established under that subsection shall specify requirements relating to the carrying out of rural impact assessments in respect of a measure that has, or is likely to have, a significant impact or effect on the socio-economic position of rural Ireland. 10

Duties regarding socio-economic inequalities

5. (1) A public body in carrying out its functions shall have regard to the desirability of exercising its functions in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities suffered by those in rural Ireland which result from socio-economic disadvantage. 15
- (2) In deciding how to fulfil a duty to which it is subject under *subsection (1)* a public body must take into account any guidelines issued by the Minister.

Annual Report

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6. The Minister shall compile an annual report on the rural impact schemes of the various public bodies which report shall be laid before the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Agriculture, Food and the Marine for debate.

Short title

7. (1) This Act may be cited as the Rural Equality Act 2015. 25
- (2) This Act shall come into operation on such day or days as the Minister may appoint by order or orders either generally or with reference to any particular purpose or provision and different days may be so appointed for different purposes or provisions.

BILLE

(mar a tionscnaíodh)

dá ngairtear

Acht do dhéanamh socrú chun go mbeidh aird ag comhlachtaí poiblí ar a inmhianaithe atá sé neamhionannas socheacnamaíoch agus eile arna fhulaingt ag daoine faoin tuath in Éirinn a laghdú, do dhéanamh socrú maidir le measúnachtaí tionchair tuaithe a dhéanamh i leith beart ar dóigh tionchar suntasach a bheith acu nó éifeacht shuntasach a bheith leo ar an tuath in Éirinn agus do dhéanamh socrú i dtaobh nithe gaolmhara.

*An Teachta Máirtín Ó Fearghusa a thug isteach,
6 Bealtaine, 2015*

BILL

(as initiated)

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*Introduced by Deputy Martin Ferris,
6th May, 2015*

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