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**An Bille um Bonneagar Ríthábhachtach, 2026**  
**Critical Infrastructure Bill 2026**

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*Meabhrán Mínteach*  
*Explanatory Memorandum*

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**AN BILLE UM BONNEAGAR RÍTHÁBHACHTACH, 2026**  
**CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE BILL 2026**

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**EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM**

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*Introduction*

The purpose of this Bill is to allow Government to designate specific infrastructure projects or programmes that the Government considers to be critical. This designation will require all public bodies in the infrastructure approvals process, without affecting their existing statutory functions, to prioritise those designated projects or programmes. It also requires all public bodies involved in the approval processes for this infrastructure to cooperate and coordinate with each other.

The Critical Infrastructure Bill does not reference specific projects or programmes. It provides Government with the power to designate projects or programmes as critical infrastructure by Order. These Orders will be laid before Dáil Éireann.

Provision is also made to ensure there is no conflict between provision for critical infrastructure projects or programmes that are designated under this Bill, with section 15 of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015.

In essence, this Bill creates a fast-track channel through existing processes for designated critical infrastructure to make sure this infrastructure is accelerated to the maximum degree possible.

*Provisions*

*Section 1* provides for definitions of terms used in Bill.

*Section 2* provides for clarity that nothing in the Act shall affect existing or future obligations or entitlements under EU law or any enactment that gives effect to obligations or entitlements under EU law.

*Section 3* provides for the Government to have statutory powers to designate a project or programme as a critical infrastructure project or programme. This will be done following a recommendation from the Minister for Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation. Having identified critical infrastructure projects/programmes, the Government will designate individual projects or programmes as critical infrastructure projects/programmes by order to be laid before Dáil Éireann. If a resolution annulling the order is passed within the next 21 sitting days, the order shall be annulled.

*Section 4* defines 'relevant public body' and 'relevant functions' for the purposes of this Act.

*Section 5* provides for the duties of any relevant public bodies. Without affecting their functions under existing legislation, relevant bodies will be required to prioritise, avoid delay, reduce timelines, parallel processes and cooperate with each other to fast-track critical infrastructure. They will also be required to allocate their resources appropriately to achieve this. Section 5 also provides for the relevant bodies to provide information to the Minister and contribute to assessments, reports and analyses.

*Section 6* provides that the Minister can give directions to any of the relevant bodies with respect to the performance of their functions in accordance with this Act.

*Section 7* disapplies Section 15 of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act to designated projects/programmes.

*Section 8* provides for the Minister to have the relevant powers to prescribe a person or body to be a public body for the purposes of this Act.

*Section 9* provides for expenses incurred by the Minister in administration of the Act.

*Section 10* provides for the short title and commencement arrangements for the Bill.

*An Roinn Caiteachais Phoiblí Bonneagair Athchóiriúcháin Seirbhíse Poiblí agus Digitiúcháin*

*Aibreán, 2026*