

*Dé Máirt, 26 Meán Fómhair, 2017
Tuesday, 26th September, 2017*

2 p.m.

**GNÓ COMHALTAÍ PRÍOBHÁIDEACHA
PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

Fógra i dtaobh Leasuithe ar Thairiscint : Notice of Amendments to Motion

144. “That Dáil Éireann:

notes:

- the devastating flooding that affected homes, businesses and farmsteads across County Donegal in August 2017;
- that the damage inflicted by the floods on local roads is estimated at €15.3 million;
- the challenges of climate change and increasingly volatile weather patterns; and
- the planned €430 million, six year programme of capital investment in flood defence measures as part of the Government’s overall Capital Investment Plan 2016–2021;

acknowledges the hard work of local authority staff, volunteers, Defence Forces personnel and emergency services in assisting those affected by the floods;

criticises:

- the delays in the roll out of humanitarian assistance to affected households;
- the one week delay in announcing funding for a Red Cross administered humanitarian fund to help small local businesses, sports clubs and voluntary community groups with application forms not available until ten days after the flooding;
- the failure to confirm a fund to assist the repair of damage to farms until two weeks after the flooding, with application forms not made available until three weeks after the event;
- the exclusion of farmers who have lost grain crops, potato crops and unharvested silage, and damage to agricultural roads from funding;
- the failure to commit to separate funding for sports organisations who experienced significant damage in excess of the €20,000 cap covered by the Red Cross fund;
- the failure to commit to funding for repair and restoration of public amenities such as Swan Park in Buncrana;
- the on-going underspend in flood defence schemes as part of capital expenditure plans;

- the Government decision not to include any provision in Ireland’s Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014–2020 to compensate farmers for losses caused by adverse weather; and
- the continued delays and denials of insurance for homeowners and businesses across the country due to flooding concerns; and

calls on the Government to:

- ensure households and businesses are given adequate flood insurance, in particular for those in areas where the Office of Public Works has invested in standard 1 in 100 year flood defence structures, and facilitate the passage of Fianna Fáil legislation on this specific matter;
- address capital underspend in the roll out of investment in flood defences and increase spending in the road infrastructure;
- amend the RDP to encompass specific provisions on supporting farmers affected by adverse weather conditions;
- expand the terms of the funding support scheme for the farming community in County Donegal to include farmers who have lost grain crops, potato crops and unharvested silage, and damage to agricultural roads;
- provide ring-fenced funding to restore sporting facilities and public amenities destroyed in the County Donegal flooding and not covered by the Red Cross fund;
- ensure that steps are taken so that delays experienced in the establishment of funding support schemes in County Donegal are not repeated in future flooding events; and
- fully and expeditiously implement Government commitments to alleviate financial burdens on households, sporting facilities, farmsteads, businesses and infrastructure in County Donegal through the humanitarian assistance fund and specific agricultural supports.” — *Charlie McConalogue, Eugene Murphy, Barry Cowen, Bobby Aylward, John Brassil, Declan Breathnach, James Browne, Mary Butler, Thomas Byrne, Jackie Cahill, Dara Calleary, Pat Casey, Shane Cassells, Jack Chambers, Lisa M. Chambers, Niall Collins, John Curran, Stephen S. Donnelly, Timmy Dooley, Sean Fleming, Pat the Cope Gallagher, Seán Haughey, Billy Kelleher, John Lahart, James Lawless, Marc MacSharry, Micheál Martin, Michael McGrath, John McGuinness, Aindrias Moynihan, Michael Moynihan, Margaret Murphy O'Mahony, Darragh O'Brien, Jim O'Callaghan, Éamon Ó Cuív, Willie O'Dea, Kevin O'Keeffe, Fiona O'Loughlin, Frank O'Rourke, Anne Rabbitte, Eamon Scanlon, Brendan Smith, Niamh Smyth, Robert Troy.*

Leasuithe:

Amendment:

1. (a) To insert the following after “criticises.”:

- “— the continued failure of the Government to submit Flood Risk Management Plans to the European Commission in line with the requirements of the European Union Floods Directive;” and

(b) To insert the following after “County Donegal are not repeated in future flooding events;”:

- “— immediately convene a consultation process with all of the farming representative organisations, the Office of Public Works and Inland Fisheries Ireland to examine how water sources, such as rivers and streams, can be better maintained to mitigate the impact of flooding in the future and to amend the relevant legislation if necessary;
- ensure that the current review of the Areas of Natural Constraints (ANC) Scheme results in adequate compensation for farmers with land prone to flooding; and” —

Pearse Doherty, Gerry Adams, John Brady, Pat Buckley, Seán Crowe, David Cullinane, Dessie Ellis, Martin J. Ferris, Kathleen Funchion, Martin Kenny, Mary Lou McDonald, Denise Mitchell, Imelda Munster, Carol Nolan, Jonathan O'Brien, Eoin Ó Broin, Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin, Donnchadh Ó Laoghaire, Louise O'Reilly, Aengus Ó Snodaigh, Maurice Quinlivan, Brian Stanley, Peadar Tóibín.

2. To delete all words after “Dáil Éireann” and substitute the following:

“notes:

- that a pluvial rainfall event on the evening of 22nd August, 2017, gave rise to sudden and devastating flooding which affected the north-west, and in particular the Inishowen peninsula in County Donegal where homes, businesses, farms, community facilities and infrastructure were badly damaged;
- the immediate and effective response of the emergency services in the areas affected, with their initial focus on rescues and protecting lives of those threatened by the flash flooding which occurred;
- the immediate and effective response led by Donegal County Council, the designated lead agency for responding to flooding events, working with the other principal response agencies, in accordance with pre-established emergency management procedures, during the flooding and in its immediate aftermath to safeguard and facilitate persons in the area affected and to enable communities to continue to function;
- the effective clean-up and roads restoration/diversion operations mounted in the aftermath of the event by Donegal County Council in co-ordination with the communities affected, and assisted by the Defence Forces, voluntary groups and local organisations, and that the elected members oversaw the response, clean-up and recovery operations of Donegal County Council;
- that a range of humanitarian support schemes, including the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection’s Humanitarian Assistance Scheme for householders, the Irish Red Cross Humanitarian Assistance Scheme for small businesses, community, voluntary and sporting bodies and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine’s Animal Welfare Helpline and Emergency Feed Provision, were activated and that local officials of the relevant organisations have worked in close co-ordination with Donegal County Council to assist those impacted by the flooding and, as demand-led schemes, are fully underwritten by Government commitment;
- that the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport is liaising with a number of sporting clubs in the area impacted by the flooding but whose damage is deemed to be outside the terms of the Irish Red Cross Humanitarian Assistance Scheme;
- that the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection activated its standing scheme for emergency humanitarian assistance on Thursday morning, 24th August, 2017, and that the Department’s representatives were on the ground from 23rd August, 2017, working with Donegal County Council to identify and make contact with those affected;
- that on 6th September, 2017, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine announced a measure to support the small number of farmers who bore the brunt of the severe flooding experienced in the Inishowen area; support will be provided to those who experienced losses of livestock, the loss of conserved fodder (hay or silage) and as a contribution towards the clean-up cost of agricultural lands, including repair to fences, damaged by debris washed up by the floods;

- that the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine commenced payments to farmers under the Areas of Natural Constraints Scheme from last week and that it has secured permission from the European Commission to make an advance payment of 70 per cent of the Basic Payment Scheme from 16th October, 2017;
- that discussions on risk mitigation measures in the agriculture sector are expected to form part of deliberations at European Union level on the next Rural Development Programme;
- that the application forms for the Irish Red Cross Humanitarian Assistance Scheme for small businesses, community, voluntary and sporting bodies were available on their website on 30th August, 2017;
- that the Irish Red Cross Humanitarian Assistance Scheme for small businesses, community, voluntary and sporting bodies relies on receiving damage assessments from business owners and that a period of time is required following the flooding event to allow for an initial appraisal of the extent of the damage to businesses to take place;
- the Government commitment to support both those affected and the public authorities who have been working in the recovery phase, and that Donegal County Council are still working to complete an estimate of the clean-up costs and the damage caused by the flooding to roads infrastructure at more than 630 sites, and that, given the exceptional nature of the response activities carried out by Donegal County Council, and the fact that the costs of these activities could not be met from within existing resources, the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government is making support available to assist the Council in meeting the costs of the response, clean-up and necessary immediate works related to the flooding and that the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and the Office of Public Works (OPW) are also liaising with Donegal County Council about works in their areas of competence;
- that Donegal County Council, as the lead agency for recovery, continues to manage and co-ordinate damage assessments and that consideration of further response and remediation options is still ongoing;
- that flooding events can result from tidal, fluvial, pluvial or groundwater conditions (or combinations of these) and that the flooding event in County Donegal was as a result of an extreme pluvial event of a type which could affect any part of the country and for which it is not possible to accurately provide specific forecasts (location and timing) with any appreciable lead-time;
- the appropriateness and effectiveness of the local emergency management system in place, derived from the 'Framework for Major Emergency Management', with the relevant local authority acting as 'lead agency' to both deliver immediate response, clean-up and recovery operations, with local political accountability, and to co-ordinate the principal response agencies, the Defence Forces and the voluntary and community sector in responding to emergencies of all kinds in their areas;
- that, in its role as lead Government Department, in accordance with 'Strategic Emergency Management, A National Framework and Structures' the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government's National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management liaised closely, appropriately and effectively with Donegal County Council from the morning of 23rd August, 2017, co-ordinated national level support for Donegal County Council and dealt with emerging issues for those impacted by the flooding, and that, in line with best practice in the aftermath of events of this kind, a review of the County Donegal experience is being carried out as part of the programme of ongoing development of emergency management capability within the local government sector;
- that the OPW has completed 39 major flood defence schemes since 1995 that are providing protection to approximately 8,000 properties with an estimated benefit to

the country of damage avoided of over €1 billion; that construction continues on 10 major flood defence schemes and design and development for a further 25 is underway that will provide protection to 12,000 properties when all are completed; that up to seven major schemes are currently anticipated to commence in the next 12 months; and that a further investment of €33 million in minor works since 2009 is protecting 6,000 properties across the country;

- the OPW's proactive flood risk planning, through the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Programme in the past number of years is nearing completion following review and assessment of the extensive response to the public consultation on the draft Flood Risk Management Plans which provided constructive and wide-ranging observations and comments, and by the end of this year the final Flood Risk Management Plans will be published setting out the proposed structural measures to be advanced through to detailed design to protect at risk communities and properties and the Government's commitment to more than double the annual allocation for flood defence schemes in the next five years from €45 million to €100 million to deliver the existing and proposed pipeline of projects;
- the publication of the Interim Report of the Interdepartmental Flood Policy Co-ordination Group in 2016, recommending policies and measures to Government that would reduce the impact of flood risks on individuals and communities, dealing with a range of issues including a voluntary homeowners relocation scheme and that Dutch experts 'have benchmarked (Ireland's) approach to flood risk management and concluded that Ireland is in line with international best practice and is well on track';
- the Government strategy for improving the availability of flood insurance cover includes prioritising spending on flood relief measures by the OPW and relevant local authorities, and improving channels of communication between the OPW and the insurance industry in order to reach a better understanding about the provision of flood cover in protected areas, complemented as necessary by targeted State emergency humanitarian assistance after flood events and that the success of this approach is evidenced by the increase in the availability of flood insurance in areas where flood defences have been installed, both fixed and demountable, with recent survey results showing that overall, 83 per cent of property insurance policies in protected areas include cover against flood risk and where the defences are permanent in nature it is 90 per cent; and
- that the OPW maintains Arterial Drainage schemes completed since 1945 on in excess of 11,500 kilometres of channels which benefits approximately 650,000 acres (265,400 hectares) of land, that the maintenance of Drainage Districts is the responsibility of local authorities and that, while maintenance of rivers and other watercourses has some benefit to prevent the deterioration of channel conveyance capacity, river maintenance would have had no beneficial effect on the extreme flooding event experienced in County Donegal." — *An tAire Tithíochta, Pleanála agus Rialtais Áitiúil*.