February 18th, 2014

**Harkin Calls for Coastal Protection & Insurance Measures**

The suggestion by Minister of State Brian Hayes that small business would have to be assisted to obtain insurance against repeated flooding losses was a welcome step forward but the problem of householders in a similar predicament also needed to be addressed.

This was stated by independent MEP Marian Harkin following a meeting with residents affected by storms and floods in coastal areas of Co. Mayo like Mulranny and Ballycroy and inland areas in Co. Westmeath.

She said:- *“Substantial damage has been done in coastal areas like Mulranny and there is a need for immediate action by Mayo County Council and the government to deliver protection measures which will help to prevent a repeat of recent damage.*

*“It is certain that we are now in an era of regular storm weather and this must be recognised by the government by providing the necessary funds for coastal protection along the Mayo and other coasts.*

*“There is also an urgency on the insurance issue not just for business but for individual householders who are quoted prohibitive rates, or none at all. It is not sufficient for Minister Hayes to refer to the previous government’s unwillingness to act on this serious issue. The ball is now in his hands and decisive and effective action is the responsibility of this government and it is one which needs to be met right now.*

“Following my recent meeting with EU Commissioner Hahn there may be an opportunity apply for the Solidarity Fund. However Commissioner Hahn emphasised the point that many member states are using some of their regional funds to build flood defences and carry out other preventative works. Ireland will receive just over €1 billion in regional funds over the next 7 years and some of this money should be earmarked to carry out these works.

“I have written to the Minister for the Environment asking that he would use these regional funds and bring some comfort that the recent devastation will not be repeated into the future”.

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"MEP of the Year " Award Winner 2011 & 2012

For all the latest updates on Marian's work at home and in Europe share and subscribe to her bimonthly newsletter: <http://marianharkinmep.newsweaver.com/newsletter/3jlh70xh30k>