

A ONCE IN A LIFETIME OPPORTUNITY



Creating 350 jobs in County Tyrone



Dalradian's proposal to build an underground gold mine in west Tyrone represents a great opportunity for the local area and for Northern Ireland.

It will bring a new industry to west Tyrone that builds upon decades of manufacturing and engineering expertise in the wider-county and the mid-Ulster area, providing a major boost for the local economy.

The project is designed to the highest standards, using engineering expertise and the latest construction and mining practices to ensure that the proposed underground gold mine will be environmentally responsible and sympathetic to its local surroundings, while creating 100's of well paid jobs for the area.

This creates fantastic prospects for young people in a part of Northern Ireland where traditionally many had to go elsewhere to find good work.

The economic stimulus of an underground mine will also create hundreds more jobs indirectly and provide great opportunities for local businesses to grow and new ones to spring up as part of the wider supply chain. A modern mine needs suppliers to service essential equipment, from pumps and forklifts to IT systems and transportation.

Buying locally and employing a local workforce is not only part of being a responsible business but makes economic sense too.

While change brings opportunity it also prompts questions. That is natural. Everyone has a right to raise concerns and ask questions.

However to inform the debate those concerns need to be based on clear evidence and fact. It is only by having a reasoned discussion that people can be truly informed and reach a balanced and considered judgement.

Dalradian has submitted a 10,000 page report to the Department for Infrastructure (DfI), one of the largest planning applications ever submitted in Northern Ireland.

That report is available for anyone to read and scrutinise and indeed it will be examined thoroughly as part of the planning process. That process will, rightly, be thorough and detailed. Every aspect of the 10,000 page report will be examined by experts to ensure that all of the statutory obligations are being met.

The planning application will likely go to a public inquiry, as recommended by the former Minister for Infrastructure, Chris Hazzard. The inquiry will allow for transparency and openness from a company which is designing a world-class underground mine and which seeks to engage with everyone.

The Mining industry is a thriving sector in Ireland, sustaining 1000's of jobs. A 2017 report by Indecon International Economic Consultants showed that the geoscience sector was worth €3.28 billion to the Irish economy that year. The report also showed that nearly 25,000 people work in the Irish geoscience sector. In Navan, Europe's largest zinc mine employs nearly 600

people. In Northern Ireland the value of the production of quarrying and conveying equipment manufactured here is worth in the region of €2.5 billion per year.

Mining is not new across these islands, however the technology that is available now is able to extract minerals more efficiently, enabling the industry to create jobs and wealth across the country.

Indeed according to the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, the geoscience sector makes up around 2 percent of the NI economy, providing around €690 million per year in Gross Value Added in 2015 and sustaining 12,000 jobs.

Dalradian's project represents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for west Tyrone, bringing well-paid and skilled jobs to the area, skills that can be transferred to other industries in time. West Tyrone will be at the centre of a new industry for Northern Ireland and will be the primary beneficiary, economically and socially.

It's for that reason that the people of west Tyrone deserve a balanced, reasonable debate based on facts and evidence.

by Gordon Best
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