

Solar Ireland warns private wires rules could delay rooftop solar rollout

Ronan Power addresses Oireachtas Committee on Climate, Environment and Energy

Dublin, 05 March 2026 – Solar Ireland has welcomed progress on the Government’s proposed Private Wires framework but warned that aspects of the current drafting could unintentionally slow the rollout of rooftop solar for Irish households.

Speaking before the Joint Committee on Climate, Environment and Energy, Solar Ireland CEO Ronan Power said the legislation represents an important modernisation of Ireland’s electricity framework and could help unlock additional renewable energy projects if implemented proportionately.

Solar deployment has expanded rapidly in recent years under existing grid and safety standards and is now a material contributor to Ireland’s renewable electricity mix. Approximately 50% of solar currently deployed in Ireland is rooftop generation, alongside utility-scale projects.

However, Solar Ireland cautioned that the proposed definition of private wires could bring rooftop installations within a full licensing requirement.

“Rooftop solar now represents a central component of Ireland’s delivery toward its 2030 renewable electricity targets,” Power said. “Under the definition of private wires as currently drafted, rooftop projects could require a full licence. Given the scale of deployment, that would place significant additional demand on the regulator and risks delaying thousands of households seeking to install solar each year.”

Solar Ireland stressed that private wires should be seen as a complementary mechanism within the electricity system, rather than a replacement for the national grid.

“The national grid will remain the backbone of Ireland’s electricity system,” Power said. “However, private wires can enable renewable generators to directly supply energy users and allow projects to proceed where grid connection timelines or costs would otherwise delay delivery.”

The organisation also emphasised that any new regulatory framework should build on existing technical and safety standards already used across the solar sector.

“The solar industry has been designing and operating grid-connected infrastructure under ESB Networks technical standards for many years,” Power said. “New regulations should build on those standards where appropriate, avoiding duplication while maintaining strong safety oversight.”

Power added that the success of the framework will depend on proportionate implementation.

“If implemented in a balanced and technically grounded way, this reform can unlock additional renewable capacity, support industrial decarbonisation and relieve pressure on the national grid,” he said.

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About Solar Ireland

Solar Ireland is the national representative body for the solar industry, representing companies across the solar value chain including installers, project developers, engineering contractors, manufacturers, technology providers and investors. The organisation works with Government, regulators and system operators to support the responsible growth of solar energy in Ireland. www.solarireland.ie

Media contact

Priscila Mc Geehan, Director of Communications & Strategy

priscila.mcgeehan@solarireland.ie

+353 (0)86 201 4933