

Rescue 117 Letter to Minister Naughton [hildegarde.naughton@oireachtas.ie](mailto:hildegarde.naughton@oireachtas.ie)

Cc: [eamon.ryan@oireachtas.ie](mailto:eamon.ryan@oireachtas.ie); [minister@transport.gov.ie](mailto:minister@transport.gov.ie)

Dear Minister Naughton,

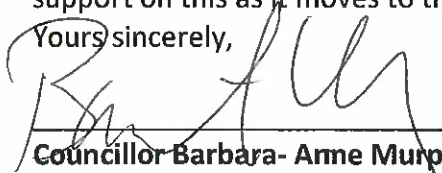
On behalf of the South East First Citizens Forum (Mayors/ Cathaoirligh of the five County Councils of the South East Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Waterford City and County and Wexford), I am writing to express our strong view around the need to retain a full 24-hour search and rescue service operating from Waterford.

We see the need for a Rescue 117 helicopter based in Waterford as overwhelming. It provides an essential service to over 1 million people, across broad terrain from Wexford to as far west as Kerry. It has had increased activity over the past years, in particular given increases in domestic tourism. The service is having genuine local impact - in 2021, out of 145 missions there were 36 lives saved and 56 situations alleviated.

It covers one of Ireland's busiest international shipping routes, which will likely be further increased in the coming years to due the impact of Brexit. Offshore renewable energy development is also likely to grow rapidly in the area and the department's recent policy paper has specifically highlighted that Ireland's ORE 2030 targets will "primarily be met through the deployment of fixed pile turbines off the East and South East coast east and south east coast". This increased commercial activity will require ongoing safety support.

A cut in the South East service would both have a negative impact on the local response times for safety incidents in the South East and also put additional pressure on other bases. This is a paramount safety issues for our citizens and we would very much welcome your ongoing support on this as it moves to the procurement phase.

Yours sincerely,



**Councillor Barbara- Arne Murphy,**  
**Chair of South East First Citizens Forum**

Cc: Councillors Fintan Phelan (Carlow County Council); Fidelis Doherty (Kilkenny County Council); Marie Murphy (Tipperary County Council); Joe Kelly (Waterford City and County Council)