

Andy Sheen

CEO

Irish Ferries

18 March 2025

Dear Andy,

## **Holyhead Port Storm Damage and Closure**

I am Chair of the Senedd's Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee. We were established to examine at policy and legislation, and to hold the Welsh Government to account in areas including business, economic development, skills, international trade, agriculture, fisheries and food.

I am writing as part of our inquiry into [Holyhead Port Storm Damage and Closure](#). On 6 March, we took evidence from a number of organisations and experts, including Stena Line Ports. Irish Ferries were invited to this session; however, disappointingly, did not respond. A [transcript](#) and [video](#) of this meeting can be found on our [website](#).

As part of Stena Line Ports' [evidence](#), they note that the damage happened to Terminal 3, which is "predominantly used by Irish Ferries". They also noted that "On 6 and 7 December 2024, there were two berthing incidents, which rendered Terminal 3 berth unusable. Storm Darragh was forecast; however, these incidents immediately preceded the peak of the storm when the red weather alert was in place."

The Committee would like to hear Irish Ferries' views on the evidence from our 6 March session. We are particularly interested in your response to the excerpts above and information about your operations between Holyhead and Dublin on 6 and 7 December, including clarification around any decisions made following the UK Met Office issuing the Red Weather Warning for Holyhead and most of the Welsh coast.



We also took evidence that two other incidents at Holyhead in 2023 and 2024 involved the berthing 'dolphins' and their fenders. Professor Andrew Potter told us there was limited information available from the Marine Accident Investigation Branch's website, but that it looked like "both involved manoeuvring in strong winds". Could you clarify if Irish Ferries were involved in either of these incidents? If so, please could you provide details?

The Committee would also welcome any other information you would like to provide that may be relevant to our inquiry into the storm damage and port closure. In particular, the Committee would be keen to hear any views you have on the:

- Causes: the factors contributing to the severity of the damage.
- Communication: the approach to communication during and after the storm, including communication with port users, communities and businesses affected by the closure as well as between Governments.
- Remediation: the speed of response in assessing and repairing the damage, including the support provided by Government.
- Impact: the impact of the closure, as well as the extent and effectiveness of the steps being taken to mitigate the impact.

Please could you reply to this letter by 11 April. I look forward to reading your evidence.

I have copied this letter to Llyr Gruffydd MS Chair of Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee as I am aware they are also interested in this issue.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew RT Davies MS

Chair: Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English

CC: Llyr Gruffydd MS, Chair, Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee