THE FUNDING OF IRISH MARINE AIDS TO NAVIGATION
UK Shipping Minister Mike Penning and Irish Minister for Transport Noel Dempsey have reached an agreement that will see aids to navigation off the coast of the Republic of Ireland wholly funded from domestic sources there by the financial year 2015/2016.

Under existing arrangements, the Commissioners of Irish Lights (CIL) effectively receives a subsidy for its activities in the Republic of Ireland from levies paid by ships calling at UK ports. Now the two Ministers have agreed to phase this out, with a view to CIL’s Republic of Ireland operations being funded entirely from domestic sources there by 2015/2016.

The Ministers also confirmed their support for the existing structure of the three General Lighthouse Authorities: Trinity House for England and Wales; The Northern Lighthouse Board for Scotland and the Isle of Man and the Commissioners of Irish Lights for the whole of Ireland. A further agreement was reached to share all relevant information on light dues charging to assist the CIL in their transition to self-sufficiency. CIL will also continue to receive Ministerial support as it works with the other GLAs to deliver continued and additional efficiencies in the future.

Penning commented, “The safety of all who sail round our coasts is paramount and aids to navigation play a crucial role in keeping our waters safe. I am grateful to my Irish counterpart for his understanding of the concerns of those who pay light dues in the UK, and this agreement will enable us to continue our support for the UK shipping industry, while ensuring the future of the all-Ireland Commissioners of Irish Lights.”

For many years, the funding of the Commissioners of Irish Lights’ work has been a joint undertaking, its costs being met primarily from light dues income from commercial shipping raised in both British and Irish jurisdictions and paid into the General Lighthouse Fund.

Light dues are charged at 41 pence (£0.41) per net registered ton (NRT) with a cap of 40,000 tons.