

EFFECTIVE LOBBYING

Presentation by John J Gormley

Power to Peatlands

3 September 2026





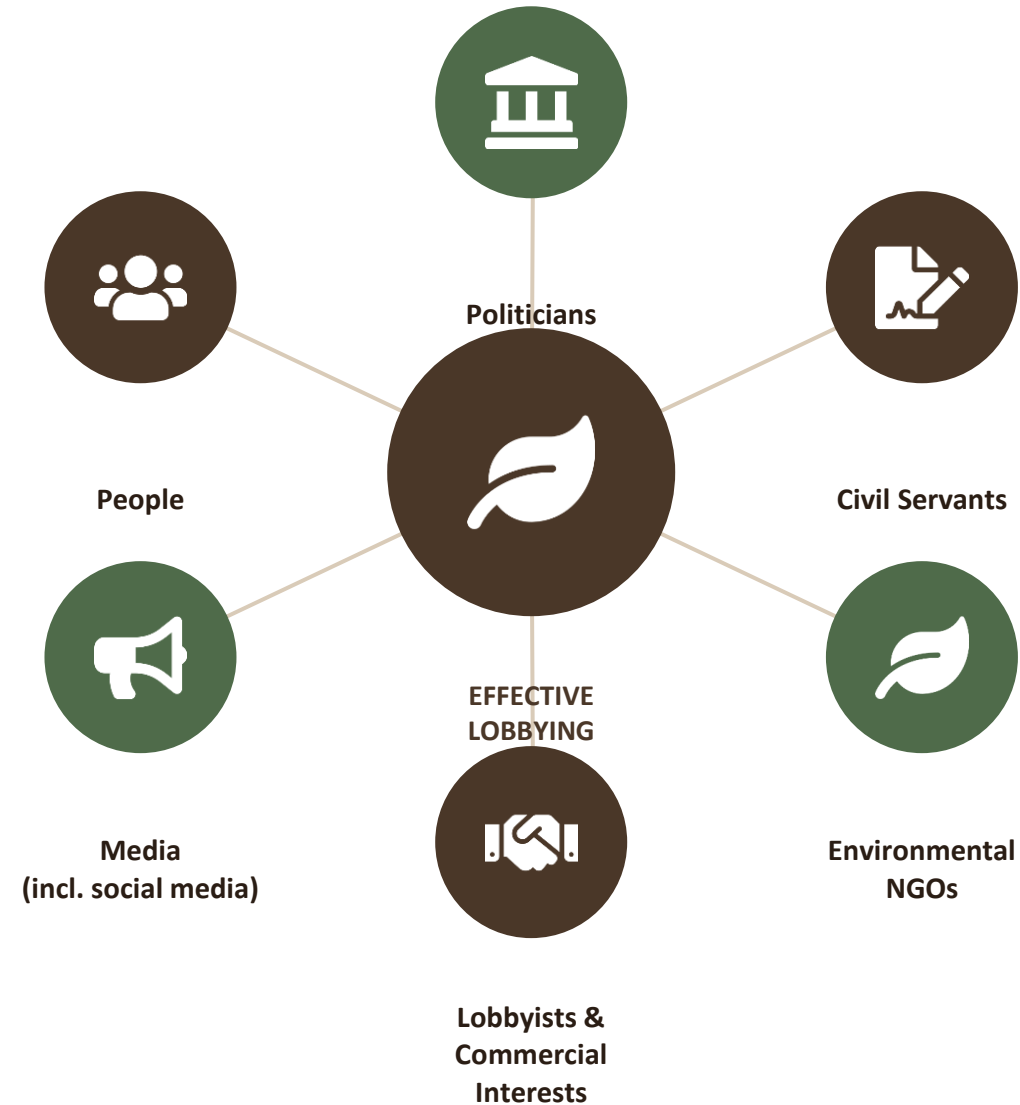
How is legislation really made?



“Laws are like sausages, it is best not to see them being made.”

— often attributed to Otto von Bismarck

Who's in the Room



Rural Ireland Says Enough



Urban

versus

Rural

The thin end of the wedge



Good News

Enforcing the EU Habitats Directive

A ten-year exemption for turf-cutting on designated bogs had previously been granted by Fianna Fáil-led governments.

Targeted bog protections

My May 2010 protection measures initially halted mechanised and domestic extraction across 31 raised bogs, paving the way for the eventual restriction across all 53 raised bog SAC networks.

Advancing national conservation policy

We oversaw habitat reports showing that less than one per cent of Ireland's pristine midland raised bogs remained intact, and used that evidence to lobby for tighter national wildlife rules and stricter planning guidelines.



Funding the Restoration

The Green Party secured a Climate and Nature Fund for restoration and rewetting, with dedicated funding to restore bogs and help transition peat workers into conservation roles.

€3.15bn

Climate & Nature Fund
for restoration and rewetting

€115m

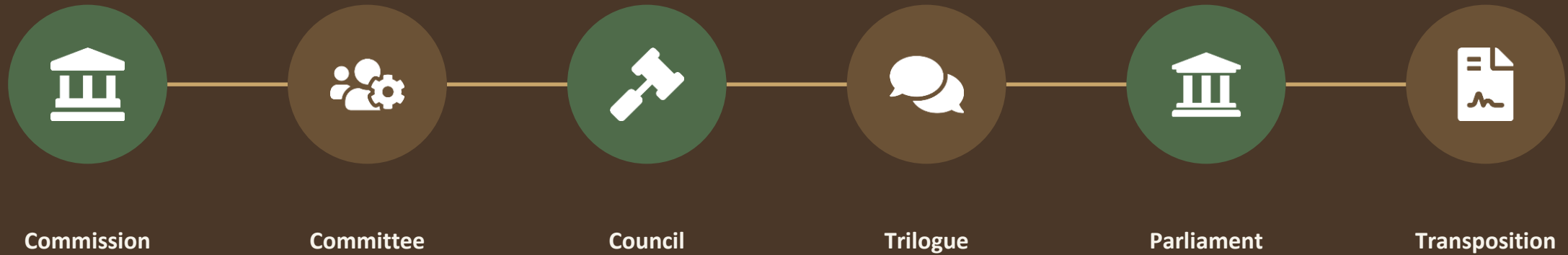
Dedicated to bog restoration
and peat-worker transition

NPWS



Carbon
Levy

Know the Machine



Six stages. Each one a separate lobbying opportunity — and a separate risk.



Frontloading

Institutions are made of individuals.

Create a power map of personal relationships.

The Permanent Government

Ministers and Commissioners come and go. The officials who draft the text — and remember every past commitment — stay for decades.

“Sir Humphrey”

Every ministry has one. Find them before the file lands on the Minister's desk.

The messenger matters more than message
Coalition WWF, Bird Life, Client Earth, EEB
Restore Nature - one voice.
Breadth of message
600 scientists , 100 businesses
Constituency Pressure
Rapid Rebuttal

FARMERS - consistency , continuity



Nature Restoration Law: A Study

The opposite of Murphy's Law



Virginijus Sinkevičius

Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries

Lithuanian, Green-aligned Commissioner who championed the law through the Council near-collapse in March 2024.



Leonore Gewessler

Austrian Minister for Climate Action & Environment

Her decisive 'yes' vote in Council on 17 June 2024 — against her own coalition partner's instructions — gave the law its narrow qualified majority.



César Luena

Spanish Rapporteur, S&D

Steered the file through Parliament, backed by S&D, Greens/EFA, Renew and the Left.



Manfred Weber

EPP Group Chairman

Led sustained opposition to the law from mid-2023 through the final vote.

Rollback Is Happening

Valdis Dombrovskis

Commissioner for Economy and Productivity — and Commissioner for Implementation and Simplification.

The man holding the pen on the current wave of ‘simplification’, whose portfolio includes overseeing the reduction of administrative burden.

Jessika Roswall

Commissioner for Environment, Water Resilience and a Competitive Circular Economy — note that word, competitive.

Successor to Sinkevičius, and meant to be the last line of defence. She is not playing that role.

ETERNAL VIGILANCE

The Cost of Lobbying

The 173 biggest corporate lobby spenders in Brussels — companies and trade associations each declaring €1 million or more — now spend a combined minimum of €381.75 million a year lobbying EU institutions, nearly 50% more than in 2020.

Not interested in Politics

€381.75m

Annual corporate lobbying spend
(top 173 declared spenders)

€15m

EU LIFE programme funding
for environmental NGOs, per year

European Peatlands Initiative. Re-connect. Re-commit.