

by Jennifer Hough

THE managing director of waste management company Indaver, which vesterday lodged a new application for planning permission to develop its €150 million facility at Ringaskiddy in Cork harbour, said the facility was now a "must have" piece of infrastructure.

John Ahern said Ireland had become an expensive place to do business and had to try and attract inward investment.

"Companies operating here have to export their industrial waste to facilities on mainland Europe," he said.

"This makes the country uncompetitive and is damaging our reputation as a good place to do business. If we are to continue to attract inward investment we need to invest in the necessary infrastructure.

"This facility is no longer a 'nice to have' but a 'must have' piece of infrastructure."

The proposed waste plant has

been at the centre of controversy since it was first announced, with environmental campaigners taking legal action in an attempt to stop it.

But earlier this month, the Supreme Court ruled against the Cork Harbour Alliance for a Safe Environment (CHASE) and ordered it to cover the cost of the legal action it had taken.

Indaver has said it will not be deciding on whether or not to pursue costs until it has completed two huge incinerators on the

proposed Cork harbour site.

According to firm the facility is part of Ireland's much needed waste infrastructure to manage increasing volumes of residual industrial and municipal waste.

The company announced its intention to lodge the application in February 2008 and has been involved in stakeholder consultations with interested parties since then.

The application includes a number of incineration technologies capable of dealing with

Ireland's industrial hazardous and non-hazardous waste and the Cork regions residual municipal waste.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will regulate all operational procedures and the plant will also require approval from the Health and Safety Authority prior to operation.

The three year construction phase is expected to create more than 300 jobs and the facility will employ more than 50 people once it becomes operational.