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## NI farmers launch legal challenge over wind subsidies

Isabel Davies (<https://www.fwi.co.uk/author/IsabelDavies>)

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Farmers in Northern Ireland have joined forces with a wind energy company to launch a legal challenge over the early closure of the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation (Niro) scheme to new small-scale onshore wind generation from 1 April 2016.

The Ulster Farmers' Union (UFU) and Simple Power have lodged papers with the High Court in Belfast seeking leave for a judicial review of consultation proposals published by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (Deti).

The legal action focuses on Deti's handling of the consultation process and follows substantial industry-wide complaints about the impact the proposals will have on farmers and businesses across Northern Ireland.

See also: [Early wind farm subsidy cut causes new project worries](https://www.fwi.co.uk/business/early-wind-farm-subsidy-cut-causes-new-project-worries) (<https://www.fwi.co.uk/business/early-wind-farm-subsidy-cut-causes-new-project-worries>)

It is being argued that many farmers have spent time and money developing farm-based wind energy projects (of less than 250kW), in the expectation the Niro scheme would be retained until 1st April 2017.

In launching proceedings, the organisations also expressed their concern about the decision to treat large-scale and small-scale wind energy generators in the same way for the purposes of closing the Niro.

This is despite technical and commercial differences between these forms of renewable energy generation.

Simple Power and the UFU have previously called on the Deti minister to maintain the status quo for small wind installations until a lawful consultation process to consider the matter can be carried out.



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