

From the Office of the Minister



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Margaret Ritchie MP
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3 November 2015

Dear Margaret

Thank you for your letter of 7th October 2015, in relation to the recent consultation on the early closure in 2016 of the NIRO to wind.

This consultation closed on 14th October and we received some 470 responses. An assessment of the comments is in progress and I will then make a response to the consultation. I can assure you that I am well aware of the concerns raised by the farming industry and other sectors and have met directly with those interests.

However, the difficulty around these issues is balancing the needs of renewable developers for subsidisation, with the cost impact on NI consumers. I'm sure you are well aware of the concerns of our largest employers in terms of competitiveness and points made by those who highlight fuel poverty issues.

As the issues have been raised with me and I am considering my response. I think further meetings at this stage, now that consultation is closed, would not advance provision of the clarity that renewable developers are calling for. If you wished to meet at some future point on wider energy issues, I would be happy to accommodate that.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Bell MLA
Minister of Enterprise, Trade & Investment