

**Christopher Osborne**

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**From:** SHANNON, Jim <jim.shannon.mp@parliament.uk>  
**Sent:** 13 October 2015 13:38  
**To:** Christopher Osborne  
**Subject:** RE: Request for meeting with Jonathan Bell

Hi Chris

I have written to Amber Rudd Secretary of State on your behalf. As soon as we get a response I will contact you again.

Regards

Betty

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Christopher Osborne [mailto:christopher@ufuhq.com]  
**Sent:** 02 October 2015 09:16  
**To:** SHANNON, Jim; JIM SHANNON [Personal information redacted by the RHI Inquiry]  
**Subject:** Request for meeting with Jonathan Bell  
**Importance:** High

1

Good morning Jim,

Trust you are well. For once it's not a dairy matter I need to speak to you about, as well as milk matters I am responsible for Renewable Energy.

Could you speak to Jonathan Bell's office and see if we can get 30 minutes to speak to him next week? We hear that he is "in office" on a Wednesday and we could fit ourselves around this. In addition, could you speak to Amber Rudd, the DECC Minister? She has the final say on this and I have already asked Margaret Ritchie to do the same. Attached is a copy of the letter we have sent Jonathan.

The long and the short of this is that many farmers made financial decisions based upon the DETI legislation which stated that NIRO support would be available upon 31 March 2017 and now the programme closure has been brought forward, with many caught in a log jam waiting grid connection, through no fault of their they are not going to be able to get NIRO support as it currently stands. This is despite the Jonathan Bell statement on 18/6/2015 when he said "DETI recently consulted on closing the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation (NIRO) to new generation in 2017 and I will shortly publish the formal government response to the consultation. I want to make it clear now however that I do not intend to follow the Westminster government's policy to close the existing scheme early".

The early closure of the NIRO consultation was launched on Wednesday, I realise that some people have objected to the erection of wind turbines your constituency, but early NIRO closure will put at risk the use of small scale turbines located on day to day farming business, farms who would look to using a renewable resource to not only reduce energy costs, but improving energy efficiency on-farm and reduce carbon emissions and climate change targets.

2

Please find below a link to the Consultation document.

[http://www.detini.gov.uk/supplementary\\_consultation\\_on\\_closure\\_of\\_niro\\_to\\_new\\_onshore\\_wind\\_-\\_final.pdf](http://www.detini.gov.uk/supplementary_consultation_on_closure_of_niro_to_new_onshore_wind_-_final.pdf)

## Background

The Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) announced its intention to close the Renewables Obligation across Great Britain to new onshore wind projects only from 1 April 2016. This announcement was made shortly after the General Election.

The consultation launched today proposes closure of the NIRO from 1 April 2016 to new onshore wind projects which do not meet specific eligibility criteria. Projects that meet the early closure eligibility criteria will be able to apply to accredit under the NIRO to 31 March 2017, with a further 12 month grid and radar delay grace period for projects which can demonstrate they meet the relevant criteria.

## The UFU view on the consultation

\*Separate Small Scale from Large Scale Wind Generation - the decision for early closure was made because of the "socialisation" of costs, namely, to continue the NIRO until 31 March 2017, would mean an addition cost to the consumer. If you separate small scale (<250kW) from large scale, an already small cost becomes miniscule. Small scale on its own means little or no added cost to the consumer.

3

\*Inadequate consultation period - the consultation on the early closure of ROC has only just landed in my email inbox, they are asking for responses within 2 weeks. That timescale is insufficient in light of the implications upon the small scale renewables sector in Northern Ireland. This could be challenged from a legal point of view.

\*NI v GB RO schemes - parity and fairness - GB have had ROC payments from 2002, they were only introduced in Northern Ireland from 2005. Hence GB have had them for 3 years longer and to end them early here in Northern Ireland leaves us at a disadvantage.

\*Grid Connection Problems and Project 40 - Ever since the NIRO was launched, the small scale wind sector has been reset by grid connection problems. Over the last 12 months, the UFU are involved in the NIE Project 40, a solution to get more small scale wind generators connected to the grid. This solution will not be available until spring 2016 at the earliest. Those who have spent money etc will only be connected to the grid using this new technology but this early closure will mean it is too late for them, leaving them at a severe disadvantage.

Many thanks

Chris

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4