

ULSTER FARMERS' UNION NEWS RELEASE



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UFU frustrated at DETI failure to meet over NIRO closure for small scale wind

The Ulster Farmers' Union says it is frustrated by the unwillingness of the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment (DETI) to meet and seek a solution to the closure of the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation Certificate (NIROC) scheme for small scale wind turbines.

The UFU and Simple Power have already initiated a judicial review of the DETI consultation process for the closure of the NIRO for onshore wind. A leave hearing is scheduled for 26 February. The UFU, Simple Power, Wind NI and Renewables NI met the DETI committee at Stormont recently and made clear their willingness to engage with the department to seek an agreed plan for the NIRO closure for turbines generating less than 250kW, the large scale wind industry having accepted the plan.

"We are trying on to get a solution that works and is fair. Many farmers and businesses have invested in this technology and face having projects shut down because of issues beyond their control," said UFU, rural enterprise chairman Gary Hawkes. He said the small scale wind industry had been 'uniquely and very badly' affected by development delays. "These are around grid connection in particular. We are proposing a grace period to allow projects awaiting grid connection a reasonable chance to connect," he said.

To pursue this, the UFU has sought a meeting with the DETI minister.

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Media Contacts

Deborah Quinn m
Linda Surplis m

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