

ULSTER FARMERS' UNION NEWS RELEASE**Date: 28th June 2016****Cyclo 135/2016****Renewables sector welcome certainty on NIRO closure**

The Ulster Farmers' Union, Simple Power, Renewable NI and Wind NI have welcomed the certainty created by legislation that closes the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation (NIRO) to new small scale onshore wind.

A spokesperson for the group said; 'While we are disappointed the NIRO subsidy is closing a year earlier than expected due to decisions by the Department of Energy and Climate Change at Westminster, we do welcome the clarity and certainty the NIRO closure legislation brings.'

"Many involved in the small scale wind industry have invested on the strength of the availability of the NIRO. They can now move forward with greater confidence that their investment has been protected if they meet the eligibility criteria."

"It is now essential that all parties, most notably NIE and the Department for the Economy, work together to ensure 'approved development' projects which meet the eligibility criteria receive grid connections. The issuing of NIE Networks letters to projects that do not have an estimated connection time must happen as soon as possible and to the satisfaction of Ofgem."

"Our sector looks forward to working with government and other key bodies in developing a new renewables support structure, post NIRO, to ensure an even playing field with GB."

ENDS//**Notes to editor**

1. The 'Renewables Obligation (No. 2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016' was passed by the NI Assembly on 27th June 2016
2. This legislation closes the NIRO to new onshore small scale wind-generating stations from 30th June 2016
3. If projects can meet further grace period eligibility criteria, they can seek accreditation up until 31st March 2019. These projects must be able to demonstrate to Ofgem at the time of accreditation that they meet the approved development conditions i.e. they are in possession of the following by 30 September 2015:

- (i) Relevant planning permission dated no later than 30 September 2015;
- (ii) A grid connection offer and acceptance of that offer, both dated no later than 30 September 2015 or confirmation that no grid connection is required; and
- (iii) A declaration confirming that, as at 30 September 2015, the developer or proposed operator of the station owns the land on which the station is to be situated or has an option or agreement to purchase or lease the land or is party to an exclusivity agreement in relation to the land.

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