

ULSTER FARMERS' UNION NEWS RELEASE**Date: 5 March 2015****Cyclo: 42/2014****UFU welcomes DETI Minister Grid Summit announcement**

The Ulster Farmers' Union has welcomed DETI Minister Arlene Foster's announcement during question and answer time at the Northern Ireland Assembly to convene a summit in an effort to resolve the issues regarding the grid connection situation in Northern Ireland.

Speaking after the announcement, Rural Enterprise Chairman Gary Hawkes said; "The small scale renewables land based sector in Northern Ireland has experienced major problems connecting to the grid for a number of years and the UFU has been lobbying intensely for these issues to be addressed. We are hopeful that Minister Foster's plans to convene a summit meeting might at last see the relevant parties, NIE, SONI and the Utility Regulator work together on getting the grid connection issues resolved. We accept that capacity is an issue and the problems that this could create for would-be grid connections. NIE have actioned Project 40 as a way to get more small scale developers connected but this will not be an instant solution and could take as long as two years to take effect."

Mr Hawkes concluded; "It is only through collaborative action of all the parties concerned that the grid connection issues will be resolved and the expectations of our members will be realised. Failure to do so will mean that many of our members will be out of pocket and this will be an opportunity missed for the land based sector in Northern Ireland."

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