

O'Neill, Lynne

From: Scott, Peter (DAERA)
Sent: 02 February 2017 15:05
To: Patton, Terence; O'Neill, Lynne
Subject: FW: PRESS OFFICE: Amended RHI line from DE.

Importance: High

Categories: Red Category

fyi

Peter Scott

Agri Emissions and Land Branch

DAERA

Room 430

Dundonald House

Upper Newtownards Road

Belfast

BT4 3SB

Tel: 02890378593 (internal ext 88593), alternative no: 02890524130 (internal ext 24130)

From: Ellis, Cathal
Sent: 02 February 2017 15:04
To: Scott, Peter (DAERA); McKendry, Martin
Cc: Mathers, George
Subject: RE: PRESS OFFICE: Amended RHI line from DE.
Importance: High

Please ensure it is clear that emerging cost increases would only have been mentioned albeit informally by DETI speakers and not by DAERA (CAFRE or AFBI) speakers.

Thanks

Cathal

From: Scott, Peter (DAERA)
Sent: 02 February 2017 14:59
To: McLaughlin, Diarmuid (DAERA); McKendry, Martin; Henry, Ronan
Cc: Mathers, George; Ellis, Cathal; Patton, Terence; O'Neill, Lynne; G_DARD PressOffice.Group, DARD; Lavery, Noel (DAERA); Fulton, Norman
Subject: RE: PRESS OFFICE: Amended RHI line from DE.

Diarmuid,

Its more than changing "facilitated" to "hosted". As Martin's reply says we don't understand the sentence and should seek clarification.

Peter

Peter Scott

Agri Emissions and Land Branch

DAERA

Room 430

Dundonald House

Upper Newtownards Road

Belfast

BT4 3SB

Tel: 02890378593 (internal ext 88593), alternative no: 02890524130 (internal ext 24130)

From: McLaughlin, Diarmuid (DAERA)**Sent:** 02 February 2017 14:52**To:** Scott, Peter (DAERA); McKendry, Martin; Henry, Ronan**Cc:** Mathers, George; Ellis, Cathal; Patton, Terence; O'Neill, Lynne; G_DARD PressOffice.Group, DARD; Lavery, Noel (DAERA); Fulton, Norman**Subject:** RE: PRESS OFFICE: Amended RHI line from DE.

Peter, I will amend this aspect of the line to read as follows and send to DE for approval – are you content

In 2015, there were a number of events hosted by DARD agencies where the emerging cost increases affecting RHI may have been mentioned informally, during presentations on renewable energy initiatives at some information events connected to the renewable energy training programme.

Diarmuid

Diarmuid McLaughlin

Senior Press Officer

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)

Room 622, Dundonald House,

Upper Newtownards Road, Ballymiscaw

Belfast BT4 3SB

Telephone: 028 90524619

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Twitter: @daera_ni

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From: Scott, Peter (DAERA)**Sent:** 02 February 2017 14:45**To:** McLaughlin, Diarmuid (DAERA); McKendry, Martin; Henry, Ronan**Cc:** Mathers, George; Ellis, Cathal; Patton, Terence; O'Neill, Lynne; G_DARD PressOffice.Group, DARD; Lavery, Noel (DAERA); Fulton, Norman**Subject:** RE: PRESS OFFICE: Amended RHI line from DE.

Diarmuid,

We don't really understand the second sentence. All presentations were at RE events, not specific RHI events. Also does "facilitated" mean something much more than "hosted".

Peter

Peter Scott

Agri Emissions and Land Branch

DAERA

Room 430

Dundonald House

Upper Newtownards Road

Belfast
BT4 3SB
Tel: 02890378593 (internal ext 88593), alternative no: 02890524130 (internal ext 24130)

From: McLaughlin, Diarmuid (DAERA)
Sent: 02 February 2017 13:40
To: McKendry, Martin; Scott, Peter (DAERA); Henry, Ronan
Cc: Mathers, George; Ellis, Cathal; Patton, Terence; O'Neill, Lynne; G_DARD PressOffice.Group, DARD; Lavery, Noel (DAERA); Fulton, Norman
Subject: RE: PRESS OFFICE: Amended RHI line from DE.

Martin/Peter, see final DE line below which they are sending for clearance.

Do either of you have any concerns with it?

DRAFT RESPONSE:

"DETI had begun to have some concerns about a pressure on the AME budget from March 2015 onwards. In 2015, there were a number of events facilitated by DARD agencies where the emerging cost increases affecting RHI may have been mentioned informally, during presentations on RHI at some information events connected to the renewable energy training programme. At that time DETI officials were under the misunderstanding that costs would be met by HM Treasury and would not be a burden on the Northern Ireland Block Grant. There is no record of any communication of the budgetary problem to DARD headquarters during 2015.

The full extent of the budgetary problem from the RHI only became fully clear to DETI for the first time in January 2016, when HM Treasury confirmed that all the costs over and above the NI share of the UK wide budget would fall on the Executive's Resource DEL. At that point, the issue became a matter affecting all Departments and DARD was copied into the papers that were circulated in February 2016 about the urgent closure of the scheme."

Diarmuid

Diarmuid McLaughlin
Senior Press Officer
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)
Room 622, Dundonald House,
Upper Newtownards Road, Ballymiscaw
Belfast BT4 3SB

Telephone: 028 90524619

www.daera-ni.gov.uk
Twitter: @daera_ni

All media queries for DAERA should be sent to pressoffice.group@daera-ni.gov.uk

From: McKendry, Martin
Sent: 02 February 2017 12:40
To: Scott, Peter (DAERA); Henry, Ronan
Cc: Mathers, George; Ellis, Cathal; Patton, Terence; O'Neill, Lynne; G_DARD PressOffice.Group, DARD; Lavery, Noel (DAERA); Fulton, Norman
Subject: RE: PRESS OFFICE: Amended RHI line.

Ronan

Content with the DAERA reply.

Martin

From: Scott, Peter (DAERA)
Sent: 02 February 2017 10:52
To: Henry, Ronan; McKendry, Martin
Cc: Mathers, George; Ellis, Cathal; Patton, Terence; O'Neill, Lynne; G_DARD PressOffice.Group, DARD; Lavery, Noel (DAERA); Fulton, Norman
Subject: RE: PRESS OFFICE: Amended RHI line.

Ronan,
Content.
Peter

Peter Scott
Agri Emissions and Land Branch
DAERA
Room 430
Dundonald House
Upper Newtownards Road
Belfast
BT4 3SB
Tel: 02890378593 (internal ext 88593), alternative no: 02890524130 (internal ext 24130)

From: Henry, Ronan
Sent: 02 February 2017 10:37
To: McKendry, Martin; Scott, Peter (DAERA)
Cc: Mathers, George; Ellis, Cathal; Patton, Terence; O'Neill, Lynne; G_DARD PressOffice.Group, DARD; Lavery, Noel (DAERA); Fulton, Norman
Subject: PRESS OFFICE: Amended RHI line.

Martin, Peter

In light of DfE line (below) suggesting their officials may have raised the issue of new tariffs during some presentations, (DfE remain unsure if it was definitely raised however), I have amended our line in response to both Nolan and the BBC.

To be aware, the original lines are still awaiting Minister's clearance.

Are you content with the new amendments in red? Grateful for your thoughts.

Ronan

QUERY Nolan: Can DAERA tell me when DARD first became aware of the budgetary pressures the non domestic RHI scheme was creating and how it became aware of them?

QUERY BBC: When was the Department first informed by about concerns about the costs of the non-domestic RHI scheme, and by whom?

RESPONSE: A spokesman for DAERA said:

"The then DETI Minister Jonathan Bell wrote to all Ministerial colleagues on the 9th November 2015 to inform them he was making changes to the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) primarily to provide for new tariffs for the combined heat and power installations and to introduce cost control measures for the biomass including a two tier structure and an annual cap on heat payments. However DARD was given no indication of the budgetary pressures.

"While DETI officials may have raised the new tariffs during presentations on RHI at some information events connected to the renewable energy training programme in the autumn of 2015, the Department itself was given no indication of the budgetary pressures involved.

"On the 5th February 2016 Mr Bell wrote to First and deputy First Minister, copied to all his Ministerial colleagues, seeking agreement to take an urgent decision on the closure of the RHI scheme. It was only in this latter correspondence that Mr Bell mentioned affordability and budgetary pressures."

DfE's DRAFT LINE: "DETI had begun to have some concerns about a pressure on the AME budget from March 2015 onwards. In 2015, there were a number of events hosted by DARD agencies where the emerging cost increases affecting RHI may have been mentioned informally though at that time DETI officials were under the misunderstanding that costs would be met by HM Treasury and would not be a burden on the Northern Ireland Block Grant. There is no record of any communication of the budgetary problem to DARD headquarters during 2015."

Ronan Henry
Principal Information Officer
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)
Room 622, Dundonald House,
Upper Newtownards Road, Ballymiscaw
Belfast BT4 3SB

Telephone: 028 90524243

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Twitter: @daera_ni

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