

**Draft Press Release****FOSTER ANNOUNCES DETAILS OF FIRST SCHEME TO GET NI RENEWABLE HEAT INCENTIVE**

Energy Minister Arlene Foster has today announced details of the first renewable heat scheme to receive funding under the recently launched Northern Ireland Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI).

The RHI is a mechanism that supports the uptake of technologies such as biomass boilers, heat pumps and solar thermal panels by providing incentive payments over the lifetime of the technology.

Sheridan & Hood, a Belfast based Building Services Company, has installed a 50KW wood pellet heating module, manufactured and project managed by BS Holdings, at its Belfast engineering facility and is now eligible under the RHI scheme to receive quarterly incentive payments based on their heat output.

Commenting on the announcement, Arlene Foster said: **“It is vital that Northern Ireland begins developing a more sustainable heating market rather than relying solely on imported fossil fuels. The RHI is in place to incentivise Northern Ireland businesses to consider renewable heating options and Sheridan & Hood will now begin to realise the economic benefits it offers.”**

The RHI is a key policy driver as DETI seeks to increase levels of renewable heating to 4% by 2015 and 10% by 2020. The tariffs set have been calculated by independent consultants and are designed to bridge the gap between the costs of renewable heating technologies and conventional fossil fuels.

The Minister continued: **“I hope this installation is the first of many. The RHI provides businesses, community groups, schools, churches and other organisations with long term financial support when switching to renewable heating. In due course it will also be available to domestic installations but in the meantime domestic**

**customers can avail of grant support under the Renewable Heat Premium Payment Scheme.**

**“In these times of higher energy prices, my Department is committed to exploring opportunities to provide greater choice for consumers, promoting more sustainable technologies and supporting those wishing to change from conventional fossil fuel heating. The development of this sector is important in the realisation of a more diverse, secure and competitive heating market in Northern Ireland.”**

‘Within the current economic climate businesses in Northern Ireland cannot afford to not review their energy costs,’ said Brian Hood, Managing Director, Sheridan & Hood. ‘For a relatively small inward investment in technologies we are significantly reducing our energy costs as a business and at the same time enabling a sustainable future.’

Brian continues, “Our wood pellet heating module serves the heating needs for our 3,000sqft premises which consist of a workshop and offices and gives us the maximum RHI payment of 5.9p per kilowatt hour of renewable heat generated.”

“Whilst other energy costs spiral out of control, the availability of locally-sourced wood pellet fuel makes businesses in Northern Ireland better placed than most to utilise renewable energy sources. I would encourage anyone who wants to save money on their energy bills to seriously consider applying for the NIRHI,” adds Brian.

### **Notes to Editors**

1. The Northern Ireland RHI has been open to applications since November 2012. The GB Energy Regulator, Ofgem, acts as the scheme administrator.
2. At this stage, the RHI is only available to non domestic installations. The Renewable Heat Premium Payment Scheme is available for domestic installations.
3. Details of both schemes can be found at <http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/energywise>