

**From:** Frank McCullagh email redacted  
by the RHI Inquiry  
**To:** [Hughes, Seamus](#)  
**Subject:** Possible changes to NI RHI grant support for non-domestic use of Biomass Boilers  
**Date:** 10 July 2015 14:11:00  
**Attachments:** [Solmatix Non-Dom NIRHI letter to DETI July 15 SH.PDF](#)

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Seamus,

Please find attached letter.

Regards,  
Frank McCullagh MEng  
Business Development Manager

Mobile Personal information redacted by the RHI Inquiry



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10<sup>th</sup> July 2015

Energy Efficiency Branch  
Department of Enterprise, Trade & Investment  
Netherleigh  
Massey Avenue  
Belfast  
BT4 2JP

Dear Seamus,

**RE: Possible changes to NI RHI grant support for non-domestic use of Biomass Boilers**

I am writing on behalf of my company, Solmatix Renewables of Nutt's Corner, County Antrim. We are one of the largest suppliers and installers of biomass boilers to Northern Ireland's commercial and industrial sectors and I believe it is fair to say that we have a reputation for the quality of our installations and the integrity of our business dealings. We most certainly have a sincere vested interest in the continued viability of this renewable energy sector, including the job security of our 50+ members of staff.

Recently, we have been led to believe that DETI is proposing certain changes to levels of grant support for biomass users, which are due to come into effect in October 2015. Our understanding is that these changes will increase the current boiler size banding and the introduction of a two-tier RHI

Let me say that in the current climate of budgetary constraint, we fully acknowledge the need for DETI to manage monies carefully and to make best use of grant funding. We also appreciate that a number of unscrupulous beneficiaries are not only taking full advantage of RHI support, but in many cases, notably within the poultry sector, appear to be actively exploiting it.

However, we have a number of concerns relating to the proposed changes as we understand them:

1. The October 2015 start date for these changes provides only a very narrow time frame for new customers to proceed and install new biomass systems. We know from experience that many will be unable to finance, obtain statutory approvals and commission their system by then. This date also imposes severe logistical difficulties for Solmatix in terms of sourcing, designing and installing appropriate systems. In light of this we would ask for an implementation date of January 2016.
2. As stated, it would appear that those exploiting RHI are primarily large suppliers within the agri-sector. It is right that the changes should veto this continued exploitation. However, by modelling RHI on this sector alone, we believe that other non-agri users, who are using RHI in a proper fashion, may be unfairly penalised and disadvantaged. We foresee that under the proposed changes, potential losers would include schools, nursing homes and churches, for example.

We would ask that the Department take our concerns into consideration before implementing any changes to RHI grant support in the biomass sector. Furthermore, we and our partners should be pleased to meet with representatives from the Department to discuss this matter in more detail, in order to ensure that a fair and equitable outcome is achieved for all future users of Biomass Boilers in Northern Ireland.

We look forward to receiving your comments and assure you of our best services at all times.

Yours sincerely,  
Frank McCullagh  
Business Development Manager  
Solmatix Ltd