

Minister! for your consideration and if contact signature please
DFE-128528
D Heagerty
18/2/16

RESTRICTED - POLICY

From: John Mills
Date: 18 February 2016
To: 1. Timothy Cairns
2. Jonathan Bell MLA

Carroll
in 1/3

Minister contact
with amendments.
S. Ken 9/3/16

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D Heagerty
19/2/16

COR 0055 2016 RENEWABLE HEAT INCENTIVE

Issue: Correspondence from Margaret Ritchie MP on RHI closure.

Timing: Due for reply 17 February.

Need for referral to the Executive: N/A

Presentational Issues: High interest from stakeholders and the media in relation to closure of the RHI schemes.

Freedom of Information: Not disclosable

Financial Implications: Closure required to prevent further pressure on budgets.

Statutory Equality Obligations: N/A.

PFG/PSA implications: NI Renewable Heat Incentive supports the PFG interim target of 4% renewable heat by 2015 and the SEF 10% target by 2020.

Legislation Implications: Closure to take effect from 29 February.

Recommendation: That you respond to Margaret Ritchie MP using the draft provided at Annex A.

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**Background**

1. Margaret Ritchie, MP has written to on three occasions you in relation to the closure of the RHI highlighting the impact that it will have on businesses, jobs and families across Northern Ireland many of who she indicates are in South Down. She refers to investments that businesses and home owners have made in renewable technology in anticipation of the RHI. She goes on to say her understanding that an assurance was given in November that the scheme would be secure at least until 31 March 2016 and adds that the sudden closure of the scheme will put many families in debt. In many cases traders will be forced into administration. She asks that you consider these points and as a matter of priority and withdraw proposals to close the RHI schemes. She also references, in a separate email, communication she has had from a constituent who stands to lose out as her house won't be completed until the end of March 2016. She also references the plight of two installers who have invested in equipment that may now be unsaleable. In a further letter she also says she "noted" investment being made available in the Autumn Statement. Sadly, this is not correct. (**Annex B**).

Recommendation

2. That you respond to Margaret Ritchie MP using the draft provided at **Annex A**.

JOHN MILLS
ENERGY DIVISION

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