

**From:** [Faulkner, Carol](#)  
**To:** [Cairns, Timothy](#)  
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**Subject:** For clearance: Media query: Banbridge Chronicle: RHI  
**Date:** 23 February 2016 11:41:38  
**Attachments:** [image001.gif](#)

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Hi Tim

We have received the following query from the Banbridge Chronicle:

*"We have received the following statement from Upper Bann MLA, Sam Gardiner (see below). I would be anxious to get a response from Jonathan Bell.*

***Gardiner warns that local jobs at risk following latest renewables decision***

*Upper Bann MLA Samuel Gardiner has warned that dozens of local jobs are at risk following the decision by DETI Minister Jonathan Bell to close the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) scheme earlier than planned.*

*Samuel Gardiner said:*

*"In recent weeks it has been revealed that the domestic and non-domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) schemes would close much sooner than planned. Indeed the Minister had even wanted to close them immediately, however it was only after such a severe backlash that he eventually decided to wait two weeks.*

*"That still isn't simply good enough. These schemes were incredibly popular and many businesses and home owners have already spent significant time and money preparing for their RHI applications and installations, as well as some counting RHI returns into business plans.*

*"In addition many people have recently installed biomass burners, encouraged by the incentives which the Department had been promoting.*

*"I am deeply concerned that there are a number of local businesses who specialise in the supply and installation of this equipment who are now facing serious difficulties following this decision. I have now challenged the DETI Minister demanding to know what level of support he will be offering to these local businesses and their employees right across Upper Bann."*

Please see below the draft response and I would appreciate if you would consider this for clearance.

Many Thanks,  
Carol

A DETI spokeswoman said: **"Both RHI schemes have been very successful particularly with the non domestic scheme over the past 12 months and more so in the run up to the scheme changes introduced in November 2015. Unfortunately the available budget for new applications has now been exhausted.**

**To help manage these budgetary pressures, the Minister has decided to close both schemes to new applications from 29 February 2016. The legislation to enable closure of the RHI by notice was approved by the Assembly on 15 February 2016.**

**This is not a decision that has been taken lightly. The Minister recognises the impact that this will have on homeowners, the local economy and wider industry. However, the immediate priority is to prevent further financial pressures in the short term. Once this is achieved the Minister will consider wider proposals on the scheme's long term future.**

**The Executive's interim renewable heat target of 4% by the end of 2015 has been exceeded and the current estimate is that around 6% of heat is provided by renewable heat technologies. Support for existing accredited RHI installations will continue for up to 20 years."**

**Carol Faulkner**

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