

From: Stuart Wightman
Energy Efficiency Branch, Energy Division

Date: 30 September 2014

To: 1. Andrew Crawford
2. Arlene Foster MLA

DETI SUB 482/2014

**QUERY FROM THE ETI COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO THE ENVIRONMENT
AGENCY AND THE RENEWABLE HEAT INCENTIVE SCHEME**

Issue: Response to ETI committee on a query on the Domestic RHI SL1 raised at its meeting on 18 September.

Timing: A response is due with the ETI Committee Clerk by Monday 6 October.

Executive Committee Referral: None

PFG Implications: The PSA targets for renewable heat are 4% by 2015 and 10% by 2020.

Presentational Issues: Likely to be significant interest from key stakeholders and the media. A press release will be prepared and issued in due course.

FOI Implications: Likely to be exempt under s.35 FOI – formulation of government policy.

Financial Implications: None

Legislation Implications: Subordinate legislation required prior to launch of domestic RHI.

Statutory Equality Obligations: Equality screening completed and no equality implications identified.

Recommendation: That you approve the draft response for issue to the ETI Committee, (Annex A).

Background

1. At the ETI Committee meeting on 18 September clarification was sought in relation to any problems or needless bottlenecks in regards to the Environment Agency measuring odour and ammonia in respect of domestic heating systems and boiler houses.

Response to ETI Committee

2. The proposed response to the ETI Committee summarises the current known position in respect of the interim domestic Renewable Heat Premium Payment scheme and officials research into requirements for odour and ammonia tests in domestic property.

Recommendation

3. I recommend that you approve the draft response for issue to the ETI Committee (**Annex A**).

Stuart Wightman
ENERGY DIVISION

cc: Andrew McCormick
Eugene Rooney
Chris Stewart
John Mills
Paul Dolaghan
Rod Robson
Seamus Hughes
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ANNEX A**REQUEST TO DETI FROM THE ETI COMMITTEE**

At its meeting on 18 September 2014 the ETI Committee discussed the SL1 in respect of the Renewable Heat Incentive. The Committee understands the Environment Agency uses apparatus to measure odour and ammonia in boiler houses. In regards to domestic heating systems, they are remote to the house and therefore odour and ammonia cannot increase, however the formula is still being applied to measure for this.

Members asked has the Minister detected any problems or needless bottlenecks in regards to the above to the advancement of the RHI.

DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSE

1. DETI has operated the Renewable Heat Premium Payment scheme since May 2012 as an interim to the domestic RHI. During that time there have been no problems or bottlenecks associated with odour or ammonia testing.
2. DETI has checked with the NIEA and cannot find any requirement to test for odours or ammonia in domestic boiler houses.
3. The current Building Regulations must be met by all renewable heat installations and in the case of combustion appliances such as biomass boilers it is crucial that the correct level of ventilation is provided in every installation. This is enforced by Local Authority Building Control Offices.

Reply prepared by: Energy Division
Date: 29 September 2014