

From: [McLaughlin, Christine](#)
To: [Clydesdale, Alison](#)
Subject: COR 553
Date: 18 March 2011 11:26:00
Attachments: [COR 553 Minister signed Chris Huhne.pdf](#)

Alison

As requested please find attached.

Christine McLaughlin

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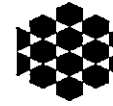
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From the Office of the Minister



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Our Ref: DETI COR 553/2010

The Rt Hon Chris Huhne MP
Secretary of State
Department of Energy and Climate Change
3 Whitehall Place
LONDON
SW1A 2AW

3rd December 2010

Dear Chris,

ENERGY SECURITY AND GREEN ECONOMY BILL

Thank you for your letter of 10 November advising of your intention to seek Parliamentary Business and Legislation Committee approval for the Energy Security and Green Economy Bill that you plan to introduce in December.

I am content that only two of the measures, namely those related to nuclear funded decommissioning and to the UK Continental Shelf, will apply to Northern Ireland. I agree that both of these areas relate to reserved matters and as such a Legislative Consent Motion will not be required.

I welcome this legislative action as it helps to improve security of energy supply for the United Kingdom as a whole. I am pleased that this work further supports the work underway between DECC and DETI officials to advance collaborative action on security of supply. This will strengthen the links between the two Departments and ensure early compliance with the new Security of Gas Supply Regulation.

There are a number of other issues, in the wider context of this Bill that I would like to comment on:-

Renewable Heat Incentive Powers

We remain grateful for the way that DECC has included Northern Ireland in the funding for the Renewable Heat Incentive. I understand that officials are working towards an amendment to the Energy Bill in due course to extend the RHI powers to Northern Ireland. We are keen to also work with DECC to maximise economies of scale in relation to delivery of an RHI and we would appreciate early sight of your final proposals for the RHI prior to public release.

Green Deal

The Green Deal proposals only extend to GB, however our officials are working closely to ensure that some elements of the Green Deal can operate across the UK – for example the accreditation scheme, and the list of Green Deal suppliers. This would be useful, not only to allow Northern Ireland companies access to the GB marketplace

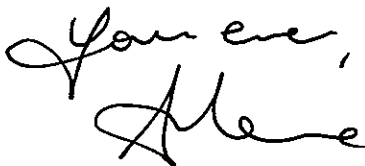
but also to allow us to maximise economies of scale, should we choose to roll out a similar scheme here. I would welcome ongoing co-operation in this area.

Offshore decommissioning

The current arrangements for decommissioning of offshore renewable electricity installations under the 2004 Energy Act extend to Northern Ireland. But, unfortunately, our territorial waters were not included in the definition of geographical coverage and therefore these provisions have no practical effect in Northern Ireland.

I accept that the Northern Ireland Assembly may have legislative authority in this area. However, I believe that there are good reasons why the work should be undertaken by DECC, in a similar manner to the way in which DECC handles licensing for gas storage in Northern Ireland waters. I understand DECC staff have offered to advise Northern Ireland on this issue but, unfortunately, we do not have the experience to undertake this work. I believe it would be better if this issue could be handled on a UK wide basis by an expert and experienced team, to ensure the consistency of approach on a key issue for the development of the offshore sector. Also from a potential inward investment perspective, UK wide legislation administered by one body would be a much more reassuring and attractive proposition. I would therefore be very grateful if DECC could reconsider the position on this, as the current Energy Bill presents a very timely opportunity to make the necessary changes and include Northern Ireland.

I look forward to the progression of the Bill and I have asked my officials to keep me updated on progress with the renewable heat amendment.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Arlene Foster', written in a cursive style.

ARLENE FOSTER MLA
Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment