

Fwd: Press Statement Re RHI

Simon Hamilton

Sent: 04 July 2016 21:45

To: Clive McFarland

Categories: Yellow Category

Clive

This is the statement we've agreed.

Thanks

Simon

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: <simonhamilton@dup.org.uk>
Date: 4 July 2016 at 21:32:22 BST
To: <siobhan.tweedie@economy-ni.gov.uk>
Cc: <johnrobinson@dup.org.uk>
Subject: Press Statement Re RHI

Siobhan

Can you send the below to press office and have them issue?

It'll need to go ASAP but embargoed until same time as NIAO report is released.

Thanks

Simon

Commenting Simon Hamilton said,

“At the outset I thank the Audit Office for their work to date on what are extremely serious issues. The Audit Office’s findings in respect of the Renewable Heat Incentive scheme (RHI) are deeply shocking and catalogue multiple failings in the design and administration of this scheme. The potential ongoing costs of this scheme to Northern Ireland taxpayers are incredible and the accusations of fraud will be rigorously investigated.

Whether it is the absence of tiered tariffs or controls on costs, at various stages of the scheme there were serious systemic failings and opportunities were missed to remediate the situation by

those directly responsible for administering the scheme.

Since becoming Economy Minister in late May, I have held meetings with senior officials about the RHI scheme and how things reached the point of it being over-budget. On foot of these discussions, external consultants are already being appointed to conduct on-the-spot and thorough inspections of installations to ensure they meet the spirit and letter of the scheme. While the policy purpose of the scheme was well founded, aimed at increasing our use of renewable technology, there will be no toleration of fraud and where it is identified it will be firmly dealt with. In addition, we are already actively considering options as to how the costs of the scheme could be controlled in the future. All options will be considered to determine whether future liabilities to the public purse can be minimised.

I take the issues raised by the Audit Office extremely seriously and I have instructed departmental officials to work through the range of serious issues raised. Lessons must be learned for the future to ensure this type of situation never arises again".

Sent from my iPhone