

Statement from combined comments.

Clive McFarland

Sent: 14 December 2016 11:24

To: richardbullick@ [redacted] Timothy Johnston

Categories: Yellow Category

A DUP Spokesperson said

"A decision to 'close the original renewable heat scheme', or more accurately to amend the original renewable heat scheme was taken by the Minister for the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment on 2 September 2015. That decision was to take effect from 4 November 2015.

No DUP Special Advisor or any other individuals from the then Office of First Minister and deputy First Minister sought to prevent or delay the 'closure of the original scheme'.

Indeed, the date from which the scheme was to be amended and terms of any such amendment of the scheme were a matter for the responsible Minister. In the event the scheme did not close until 18 November due a delay in securing financial and legal approvals.

Following representations, including those from other political parties, the Minister for the Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment decided to extend the tiered scheme for a further two weeks. This decision was publicised and explained at the time as were the criticism of the Minister for the original proposed timing of the closure.

As the Enterprise Minister made clear at the time the First Minister and deputy First Minister supported this decision in light of the concerns expressed at the time and the fact that cost controls had already been introduced from November 2015. Civil Servants expressed no objection to the two week extension in light of the legal dangers of the lack of adequate notification period.

It should of course be noted that despite the extension of the scheme for a further two weeks the opposition parties nonetheless still voted against the closure."

Commenting on a story in today's Irish News the spokesperson continued:

"The story on the front page of today's Irish News is also erroneous. The decision to introduce cost controls to the non domestic scheme from 4 November 2015 was taken by the DETI Minister on 2 September 2015. This was first dealt with by the ETI committee on 8 September 201. It was then put back from 4 to 17 November due a delay in securing legal and financial approvals."

Concluding, they added:

"Further comment will be made later today."

Re: Impartial statement

Deborah Armstrong

Sent: 14 December 2016 13:45

To: Clive McFarland

Ok no problem. I'll paste them in, change that and send??

Sent from my iPhone

On 14 Dec 2016, at 1:26 pm, Clive McFarland <clivemcfarland@dup.org.uk> wrote:

Given Richards cautiousness earlier. It might be useful to copy and paste these lines about closing the scheme etc in instead of the bit at the end of the second last paragraph. Keeps it standard with the party statement.

There's an 's' missing in public accounts committee.

No DUP Special Advisor or any other individuals from the then Office of First Minister and deputy First Minister sought to prevent the 'closure of the original scheme'.

For the avoidance of any doubt, no one at the then OFMDFM sought to delay the closure of the scheme.

Sent from my iPhone.

On 14 Dec 2016, at 12:46, Deborah Armstrong <deboraharmstrong@dup.org.uk> wrote:

Arlene,

As promised.

Rodney sent questions relating to Fermanagh specifically. The thrust of those are on companies availing of scheme, abuses of scheme and need to resign.

Take a look at the below and let me know what you think.

First Minister Rt Hon Arlene Foster said, "Over the last week much has been made in the media on the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI), with many issues raised about it. Of course I was DETI Minister at the time and so there have been some who have called for my resignation. I will not resign from my position as I did everything I could at the time to ensure the whistleblowers' concerns had been passed onto the relevant people. Their concerns were not dealt with as they should have been by the DETI officials.

The Public Account Committee is carrying out investigations into the RHI Scheme and I will make myself available to speak to them, when I am invited to do so. I am prepared to meet the challenges head on

and deal with them, that is the mark of a leader and when the going is tough I will not walk away.

Those that have levelled attacks this week have not been Minister's themselves. This is not a time for cheap headlines, political point scoring and cheap stunts. They offer no solutions and as yet I haven't heard any support from the other parties supporting the Economy Minister Simon Hamilton, who is working to examine ways to mitigate the cost of the scheme. He will bring a proposal forward to the Assembly in the New Year. It must be remembered that there was criticism towards the DUP when the Minister announced the closure of the scheme, particularly from the UUP and SDLP. However to be very clear, no one at the the OFMDFM sought to delay the closure of the scheme

Regards those who have availed of the scheme in Fermanagh, it would be impossible to pinpoint any abuse of schemes unless a full investigation takes place."

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Personal information redacted by the RHI
Inquiry