

POL-00775

Re: Information from PAC gives clear vindication of Arlene Foster's role-Dodds

Clive McFarland

Sent: 01 March 2017 20:54

To: andrew crawford [andrewdcrawford@

Personal information redacted by the RHI Inquiry

Categories: Yellow Category

I'll check the press office account later but a lot of stuff deleted from it more regularly.

My guess is Richard would have drafted as he done a detailed thing responding to mcbride around the same time also based on the PAC hearing.

He'd have been the only one who would have went through it in detail.

Sent from my iphone

On 1 Mar 2017, at 20:52, andrew crawford <andrewdcrawford@

Personal information redacted by the RHI Inquiry

wrote:

Would you able to find out on your work computer in the office? Nothing urgent, but I'm in to find out who it when through

Sent from my iPad

On 1 Mar 2017, at 20:15, Clive McFarland <clivemcfarland@dup.org.uk> wrote:

I can't see any earlier drafts in my mailbox or where it came from originally.

Clive McFarland
DUP Press Office

Tel: 02890 654479

Mob: Personal information redacted by the RHI Inquiry

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From: DUP Press Office

Sent: 20 January 2017 15:17

Subject: Information from PAC gives clear vindication of Arlene Foster's role- Dodds

Information from PAC gives clear vindication of Arlene Foster's role- Dodds

DUP Deputy Leader Nigel Dodds MP said, "Thanks to Dr Andrew McCormick's evidence to the PAC this week, the picture is now much clearer. And it raises serious questions about why the Opposition parties and sections of the media sought to blame Arlene Foster for the RHI

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debacle. That campaign of vilification has had no basis in fact.

During the Public Accounts Meeting meeting Dr McCormick made clear there is no evidence of wrongdoing by Arlene Foster, and that the failings in the design and operation of the RHI scheme were the responsibility of the civil service. Arlene Foster has made those points repeatedly and they have now been vindicated.

It is clear that only a public inquiry can establish the full facts behind the RHI debacle. Arlene Foster has been pushing for an inquiry since mid-December. Those efforts were repeatedly frustrated with others preferring to engage in mud slinging and collapsing the institutions to getting to the truth. Unfortunately the cost of this collapse will be felt in our health service and other vital public services for months and years to come. At last we now have an inquiry set up which is positive news.

It is important that the public hear all the facts in relation to this matter. The focus now also shifts to the officials in the Department. The disclosure that officials in the Department may have tipped off the industry that RHI cost controls were planned in 2015 is of the utmost seriousness and needs rigorous investigation. If true, this will undoubtedly have been a major contributory factor behind the spike in applications.

Furthermore, Dr McCormick has rebutted details of the account given to the media by Jonathan Bell. This comes on top of the rebuttals issued by the Department and given to the Assembly last month. We look forward to a detailed BBC 'fact check' on the Bell allegations that it reported so prominently.

It is timely, to further point out that Arlene Foster stands over what she told the Assembly last month when she then said, 'The former Enterprise Minister claims that he made a decision to amend the RHI scheme but was overruled by special advisers. Since last week, I have specifically investigated this claim. The evidence is clear. The only decision taken by the Minister was in early September to amend the scheme in November. The Minister was not subsequently overruled by special advisers, and I am clear that whatever representations may have been made by anyone on this issue, it was not being done with the authority of the party.'

The facts are there and it shows that Arlene Foster has been honest and acted with great integrity. The public want the truth rather than cheap political point scoring and media frenzy based on a distortion of the facts. I look forward to the truth being displayed fully in the public inquiry."

ENDS

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