From: Uel Mackin
To: NIRO2015
Subject: NIRO Consultation
Date: 14 October 2015 15:15:00

Dear Sirs,

As an elected member of Lisburn Castlereagh City Council I represent an area which is predominantly rural. It's against this background that I comment on the proposals to end the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation.

I understand the desire to be aligned to DECC and welcome the Ministers desire to protect consumers, investments made and maintain focus on renewable energy targets but have reservations about the impact the proposals, if implemented, will have on the farming community.

Whilst the consultation documents distinguishes between cluster and non- cluster projects it fails to provide and information on the proportion of support costs attributable to each. It is therefore difficult to fully understand the financial impact involved.

Clusters. In relation to connections to NIE clusters I have no issue and am content with the recommendation.

Non-clusters This group of renewable energy providers mainly operate single turbines of up to 250kw. Most of these farmers have invested considerable funds and many would view this investment as their "pension pot". Others have commenced or are in the process of getting the various approvals put in place and to guillotine them at this stage i.e. 30th September is much too severe.

There are delays mainly due to planning approval lead times and connection agreements over which applicants have no control. NIE Project 40 was to help overcome connection agreements but I understand this will not be available until spring 2016 at earliest meaning that some connections cannot be made by then, and thus out of kilter with the proposals. The outcome will without doubt be a severe financial burden to such farmers.

I would suggest that consideration to extend the grace period for non- cluster turbines by six months to 31st March 2016. This would provide an opportunity for planning and connection agreements to be put in place for applications currently in the system. It would then make sense to extend the connection period by a further 12 months.

In conclusion, I believe that early closure of the scheme to support non-cluster turbines will cause financial difficulty to the farming community, it will put at risk the use of wind energy on farms and thereby leave them open to increased energy costs and reduced efficiency.

Yours faithfully

Uel Mackin

Cllr. Downshire East Area Lisburn Castlereagh City Council

Sent from my iPad