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Renewable Electricity Branch
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
Netherleigh
Massey Avenue
BELFAST
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Dear Sir/madam,

I wish to set the tone for this response by highlighting our discontent with the executive decision to close the NIRO for onshore wind a year earlier than previously advised. We are a small business and since our Inception in 2010 we have been heavily involved in the wind industry in NI, this announcement has effectively destroyed our core business. I also wish to make it clear that none of us expected the NIRO to last forever; however at the very least we expected to get a reasonable notice that it was going to close.

Our Energy Minister announced earlier this year that it was his intention to continue with the NIRO scheme for onshore wind as planned up until Apr 2017. This reassured the industry and predictably developers and landowners spent a lot of money on the back of this announcement, why wouldn't they? The fact that his latest announcement completely back tracks on this and closes the scheme a lot earlier than anticipated is, quite frankly, a joke. Our Minister tells us that his hand was forced on this issue in the assembly and that other parties did not accept his decision to carry on with the scheme until 2017. On this basis we can only ask, why did the Minister not think about these implications earlier in the year when he reassured the industry? Are we all to believe that he was not aware that there would be such opposition to this motion? The fact that he made such a reassuring announcement has essentially put fuel on the fire which threatens to destroy the

wind industry in this country. If a managing director or executive of a private sector organisation made such a foolish decision they wouldn't have a job to go back to. Of course in our pantomime assembly the minister resigned (again) shortly after making the announcement, completely doing away with any kind of short term accountability.

Further to that above, we have an extensive client base who have submitted planning applications and grid connection applications over the past few months. They are now in a position whereby they have wasted thousands upon thousands of pounds. These farmers and landowners knew that there was no guarantees in this industry, however they were encouraged by the announcement of Minister Bell. Surely the government now need to reassess the closure of NIROCs from March of 2016 and at the very least extend the cut off point for eligibility for grace periods, in order to give individuals like those mentioned above a fighting chance to obtain the necessary consents and build out their respective projects.

In short, we are annoyed, disillusioned and saddened by the government's intention to cut the NIRO a year earlier than expected and impose such stringent conditions to grace period eligibility criteria. This announcement will have mammoth ramifications on our existing business and creates an extremely uncertain future for us going forward. Further to that we have an extensive client base of farmers who have spent thousands of pounds paying planning fees and NIE fees only to have the door slammed shut in their face, without any kind of notice. The industry as a whole is still reeling from the fact that this has happened and should the government go ahead with its plans to cut onshore wind incentives a year earlier than expected then some serious questions will need to be answered.

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