



Rt Hon Ed Miliband MP
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Your reference:

Our reference: COR/928/2008

Dear Ed

27 February 2009

I refer to your letter of 15 December 2008 seeking the views of devolved administrations on the Committee on Climate Change Report "Building a low-carbon economy – the UK's contribution to tackling climate change".

I have taken the matters raised by the report in relation to the UK 2020 target and carbon budgets to the Northern Ireland Executive and I have authority to respond as follows:

- the NI Executive notes the Committee on Climate Change's report as a further contribution to our knowledge of the level of UK emission reductions and policies necessary to meet the legislative requirements of the Climate Change Act 2008;
- we take note of the level of carbon budgets indicated in the report, recognise the benefits of energy efficiency, the potential niche benefits for Northern Ireland low carbon companies and the need to reduce reliance on fossil fuels;
- however, we stress that the budgets will make more difficult the NI Executive's ability to increase employment, improve the competitiveness of the economy and eliminate fuel poverty;
- we point out that budgets may potentially have a negative impact on NI Executive finances going forward;
- on the fuel poverty issue that we are not fully convinced that social tariffs are a viable option given the very high levels in Northern Ireland (possibly as high as 40%), that the 170,000 households identified in the report may be an underestimate based on current recorded levels and there is a need to reinforce the case across the UK for funding and concerted attention to this issue; and
- given the long term nature of the objectives we welcome continuing engagement with the CCC and UK Ministers on these matters.

I trust you will feed these views into your consideration of the UK 2020 target and carbon budgets and anticipate that you will keep my officials and I fully informed as you make UK regulations on these.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sammy', written in a cursive style.

SAMMY WILSON MP MLA
Minister of the Environment