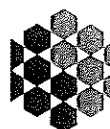


From the Office of the Minister



Department of
**Enterprise, Trade
and Investment**

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Your Ref: SW/np

Our Ref: DETI COR 1219/2015

Ms Suzanne Wylie
Chief Executive
Belfast City Council
City Hall
BELFAST
BT1 5GS

S
5 November 2015

Dear Suzanne,

PETROLEUM EXPLORATION AT WOODBURN FOREST

Thank you for your letter of 9 September in relation to concerns about the proposed drilling by InfraStrata Plc in Woodburn Forest, Carrickfergus, under Petroleum Licence PL1/10. I apologise for the delay in responding.

The concerns raised in your letter are issues regulated by a number of organisations and I note that your letter has also been sent to the Minister for the Environment and to Mid and East Antrim Council.

I am therefore responding regarding the issue directly concerning the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI); namely the matter of no Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) having been carried out by DETI.

The EU SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) applies to plans and programmes whose first formal preparatory act was on or after 21 July 2004. The current petroleum legislation in Northern Ireland specifies an "open door" system whereby companies can apply for any unlicensed area of Northern Ireland at any time. As such the petroleum licensing regime for Northern Ireland has remained essentially the same since the late 1980s and predates the SEA Directive. Accordingly a SEA was not deemed necessary by DETI at the time of issuing PL1/10 to InfraStrata Plc.

I trust you will find the above helpful.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan F. Bell

JONATHAN BELL MLA

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

11.11.15

Copied to:

Siobhan Toland

Stephen McCrory

Barry Flynn

Chief Executive's Office		
Date	6.11.15	
Seen by CX		
Referred to		
ACX	Corp Comms	Dem Serv
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