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Dear Ms. Dickson

PLANNING CONSULTATIONS FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS

Thank you for your letter to Katrina Godfrey, dated 7 August, regarding your concerns about the postponement of issuing planning advice to local planning authorities for agricultural developments. As this was a pause in NIEA advice, it is more appropriate for me to respond.

The decision to temporarily pause the use of NIEA's Standing Advice on ammonia was informed by DAERA's ongoing review of this issue, the recent challenge to a Planning Appeal Committee planning decision by Fermanagh and Omagh DC, awareness of an increasing number of planning enforcement cases related to air pollution and awareness that some planning authorities are not basing their decisions on the DAERA Standing Advice, due to perceived vulnerabilities in its application. Against this complex background, a temporary pause was required to allow officials to consider the use of the Standing Advice.

With reference to NIEA's role in the planning process; as a statutory consultee, our duty is to provide advice to planning authorities on a number of environmental matters, including air pollution emissions from agricultural installations and activities. You will be aware that this is chiefly in relation to ammonia emissions from livestock installations. The statutory determining authorities for making planning decisions are the Local Planning Authorities (Councils) or, for regionally significant or 'called in' applications, the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). Planning authorities/DfI are entitled to determine planning applications in the absence of advice from statutory consultees.

Across NIEA and indeed across DAERA, officials are continuing to work towards solutions that support sustainable agriculture while protecting the environment from air pollution impacts. The recent consultation on the draft Ammonia Strategy for Northern Ireland is an important step towards achieving this goal, as is the recently issued Call for *Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.*



Evidence on the Future Operational Protocol, on which we have gratefully received your comments. It is my hope that, together, we can develop solutions to deliver on our environmental responsibilities while facilitating sustainable agriculture.

In conclusion, I do want to stress that this is very much a temporary pause to allow consideration of this complex matter by senior officials. I trust you find this helpful.

Yours sincerely,



Paul Donnelly
Chief Executive

Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.



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