

Example of a typical response to the Committee Stage of a Bill

The Forestry Bill for Northern Ireland 2009 A Submission to the Committee for Agriculture and Rural from <your name/organisation>

Introduction:

<Insert background information on your organisation and your interest in the Bill/Inquiry. This information should be concise and relevant to your organisation's interest in the subject matter.>

Our response to the Bill/Inquiry has been laid out in the form of a specific, line-by-line commentary.

The Bill

Part 1 – Functions of the Department

Clause 1: The word 'expand' must be included in this clause, on the following basis...The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has the general duty of promoting **and expanding** forestry.

Clause 2: No Comment at this time

Clause 3: Recognition has to be taken of DARD land, where they do not own sporting rights (shooting rights).

Clause 4: We raise a general concern that DARD could begin to operate as a commercial business outside of forestry activities and use unfair competition (crown exemption) against the smaller private sector. Therefore, this clause requires re-drafting in order to define the term 'purpose other than forestry' activities.

Clause 5: This is the most contentious proposal within Part 1 of the Bill. This clause requires re-drafting and a clear definition given of the circumstances in which the compulsory acquisition of land may be used as, potentially, it would give a very unfair advantage to the Department, especially for non forestry purposes.

Clause 6: No Comment at this time

Clause 7: Incidental Powers represent another very contentious area. This clause must be re-drafted and the 'Incidental Powers' clearly defined.

Part 2 – Protection of Forest Trees from damage

Clause 8: This clause requires re-drafting as it does not take into full consideration the fact with regard to a large percentage (estimate 50%) of the Forest Service estate land, the sporting rights are not owned by the Department. There is little or no recognition of animal welfare within this draft clause.

Clause 9: This is the most contentious clause within this part of the Bill. The clause requires re-drafting, as this would potentially allow the Department to authorise shooting on private land, over which they have no jurisdiction (or crown exemption?). We believe these proposed powers do not sit within existing firearms legislation or the 1985 Wildlife Order. Animal welfare concerns have also been ignored.

Clause 10: No Comment at this time

Clause 11: This clause requires re-drafting as we believe it does not sit well with other legislation.

Clause 12: No Comment at this time

Clause 13: No Comment at this time

Part 3 – Felling of trees

Clause 14: No Comment at this time

Clause 15: No Comment at this time

Clause 16: No Comment at this time

Clause 17: This clause requires re-drafting to clarify what a felling management plan requirements clearly are and the ability to grant aid the felling management plan as per other UK jurisdictions.

Clause 18: No Comment at this time

Clause 19: No Comment at this time

Clause 20: This clause requires re-drafting to allow the Department not to charge for felling licences until such time as it becomes accepted practice in the rest of the UK.

Clause 21: No Comment at this time

Clause 22: No Comment at this time

Clause 23: No Comment at this time

Clause 24: No Comment at this time

Clause 25: No Comment at this time

Clause 26: No Comment at this time

Clause 27: No Comment at this time

Clause 28: This clause requires re-drafting as it gives unfair advantage to the Department by exempting it from the felling licence system. The Department rationale to justify their exemption is because all the Department woodland is certificated to international standards of forest management and accredited under the UK Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS). Our company and others in the private sector also run Forest Certification Group Schemes, managed to international standards and accredited to UKWAS, yet no concessions are offered.

Clause 29: No Comment at this time

Part 4 – Miscellaneous and Supplementary

Clause 30: This clause requires re-drafting as we do not agree with giving the public a pedestrian right of access on all forestry land for recreation, as the Department do not own sporting rights on up to 50% of the land.

Clause 31: No Comment at this time

Clause 32: No Comment at this time

Clause 33: No Comment at this time

Clause 34: No Comment at this time

Clause 35: No Comment at this time

Clause 36: No Comment at this time

Clause 37: No Comment at this time

Clause 38: No Comment at this time

Clause 39: No Comment at this time

Concluding Remarks

<Insert any general comments that you might have but that are not specific to particular clause within the Bill and indicate if you would wish to >

