



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure

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**From: Peter Hall
Clerk to the Committee for Culture Arts and Leisure**

Date: 8th January 2016

**To: Stella McArdle
Clerk to the Committee for Agriculture and Rural
Development**

Subject: Fisheries Bill

Dear Stella,

Thank you for your memo of 14th December 2015 regarding the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development's further discussions around the Fisheries Bill. The Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure considered your memo at its meeting this morning in the context of its wider deliberations around Members' scrutiny of clauses 10 to 13 of the Fisheries Bill. The Committee agreed that I should write to convey the outcome of those deliberations.

As I have previously indicated, the Committee shares the ARD Committee's concerns regarding the extremely short timescales involved in completing the Committee Stage of the Bill to allow sufficient time for the Bill to complete its other Stages. Additionally, the Committee also shares the ARD Committee's concern that rushed scrutiny of the Bill could result in poor legislation being made. The Committee also wrote to Minister Ní Chuilín expressing Members' concerns about the effectiveness of the scrutiny of the Bill that the Committee could undertake in the reduced timeframe available. However, the Minister indicated that while she understood the Committee's concerns she urged Members to proceed with their scrutiny of the DCAL clauses of the Bill.

At its meeting this morning the Committee also reviewed the responses it has received from stakeholders with respect to the Committees' joint consultation on the Bill. These responses came predominantly from the hydroelectric sector and shared significant concerns about relevant proposals contained within the Bill. Members also received a briefing from RaISe regarding clauses 10 to 13 of the Bill, which echoed these concerns and raised further questions. Additionally, the Committee considered a RaISe paper examining the potential cost of implementing the Bill.

Following discussions around these issues the Committee agreed that there is neither sufficient time for Members to bottom out these issues and answer these questions, nor is there time to develop and consider any potentially necessary amendments to the clauses. It is not that the Committee is unsupportive of the Bill, and Members believe that the issues that it contains should and can be dealt with, possibly as part of a new, more focused consultation. However, the Committee does not believe that there is adequate time within this mandate to take forward all the clauses in this Bill in full confidence that they will make good legislation.

As a result the Committee has agreed that it will not undertake scrutiny of clauses 10 to 13 of the Bill. I understand from your memo that Minister O'Neill's has indicated that at Consideration Stage she will only take forward such clauses as the ARD Committee is content that there has been time to scrutinise thoroughly. Members would be grateful if the ARD Committee would include clauses 10 to 13 with those with which your Committee has concerns.

The Committee agrees with the ARD Committee view that the deferral of most of the provisions in the Bill to the next mandate will allow for better legislation that is of benefit to the stakeholder groups.

Regards,



Peter Hall
Committee Clerk