

To whom it may concern

I would wish to register my concern as a member of the public to the content of the Planning Bill, and particularly the way in which additional clauses on economic development are being slipped in without proper public consultation.

I fully support the submission on behalf of Friends of the Earth Northern Ireland and do not intend to add to its comprehensive assessment of the dangers and questionable motives behind this attempt at introducing planning policy by the back door and without proper public consultation.

As a member of the public I am also concerned that this will set a dangerous precedent and believe that the elected representatives who are attempting to railroad this through are showing a contempt to the public and the due law making process. I do not believe this would be allowed to happen in any other jurisdiction.

I would commend the Environment Committee for affording the public this opportunity to express its view on this issue, but remain worried that it does not represent adequate and proper public consultation as should have been the case for such significant changes to planning legislation. However it is recognised that it has been placed in this invidious position by the SDLP Minister of the Environment and his attempts to underhandedly introduce new clauses to this important piece of legislation.

It is important to note that the recent failed attempt by this same party (SDLP) to introduce last minute change to the Justice bill, to alter the law on abortion without public consultation, sends a clear message that, despite its title, the SDLP is neither social nor democratic.

Sinn Fein, the Alliance Party and Green Party are all to be commended for their principled stance in standing up for the public interest by blocking the SDLP's attempt to undermine proper law making process in its desire to force through controversial changes to the Justice Bill by the back door. Therefore I would call on the Sinn Fein and Alliance Party members of the Committee to demonstrate consistency and oppose the SDLP Minister's undemocratic and biased attempt at law making.

Like the stance adopted on the Justice Bill, this is a critical matter of public principle for Sinn Fein, the Alliance Party and Green Party, and as with that Bill, the Planning Bill should, if necessary be opposed with a Petition of Concern.

Please acknowledge receipt of this e-mail
Thank you

John Martin