Northern Ireland Assembly

Committee for Finance
Room 346
Parliament Buildings

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To: Dr Janice Thompson, Clerk to the Committee for AERA

From: Peter Hall, Clerk to the Committee for Finance

Date: 10th September 2026

Subject: Areas with Natural Constraints (Payments) Bill

Dear Janice,

In relation to the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs call for evidence on the *Areas with Natural Constraints (Payments) Bill*, this Committee asked the Department of Finance for any relevant policy locus with this Bill. The Department of Finance has indicated that this may lead to additional resource requirements for DAERA which have yet to be determined.

At its meeting of 9th September 2025, the Committee for Finance agreed to copy this information to the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.

You will wish to bring this to the attention of your committee.

Regards,

Peter Hall
Clerk to the Committee for Finance

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REQUEST FROM: FINANCE COMMITTEE – DALO READOUT - MEETING WEDNESDAY 17 JUNE 2026

Point 2 – Areas with Natural Constraints (Payments) Bill: The Committee would ask the Department to consider this Bill and indicate if it has any remit or if there is any relevant policy locus within the Bill's provisions. This will inform a response to the AERA Committee. Call for Evidence can be found here: Areas with Natural Constraints (Payments) Bill

Response –

If the Bill is enacted, it would place a statutory obligation on DAERA to reintroduce payments to farmers operating in Areas with Natural Constraints (ANCs). These may lead to additional resource requirements for DAERA but these have yet to be determined.