NI Chamber
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NI Chamber Response

Renewable Electricity Generation Bill

Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for the Economy

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NI Chamber response on the Renewable Electricity Generation Bill and Renewable Electricity Price Guarantee

1. **Executive position**

NI Chamber welcomes the Renewable Electricity Generation Bill and supports its passage. It provides the enabling framework required to establish the Renewable Electricity Price Guarantee (REPG), giving Northern Ireland a credible route to attract investment in new renewable generation.

Northern Ireland has lacked a dedicated renewable electricity support mechanism since the closure of the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation. REPG can reduce revenue risk, improve project financeability and help prevent deployable capital being directed towards competing jurisdictions.

As enabling legislation, however, the Bill is only the first step. Success will depend on the regulations, auction design, standard terms and institutional arrangements that follow. NI Chamber therefore supports timely passage alongside early clarity, meaningful consultation, transparency and a credible implementation timetable.

2. **Alignment with NI Chamber priorities**

Progression of REPG is consistent with NI Chamber's January 2026 energy position paper, *Building Momentum with Common Purpose*. The report called for progress on enabling legislation alongside grid upgrades, storage, clearer policy timelines and coordinated leadership. REPG is necessary, but its economic value depends on parallel action on planning, connections, network investment, flexibility and storage.

This position should be read in context of the wider recommendations of the report, which seeks a meaningful and proportionate response across heat, power and transport in dealing with decarbonisation, security of supply and cost/competitiveness.

3. **The economic test**

NI Chamber's support is grounded in the interests of the business community as a whole, consumers and the wider economy. REPG should advance three connected outcomes:

1. **Affordability and competitiveness:** reduce exposure to volatile imported fossil-fuel prices, minimise whole system costs and support competitive electricity prices for businesses in Northern Ireland.
2. **Security and resilience:** ensure renewable growth is accompanied by sufficient network capacity, flexibility, storage and dispatchable back-up.
3. **Investment and lower-carbon growth:** mobilise private capital, support supply-chain opportunity and contribute to statutory renewable electricity objectives.

These outcomes must be pursued together. Short-term cost restraint that defers essential infrastructure can create higher congestion, curtailment and balancing costs later. Equally, support must remain subject to competition, robust appraisal and transparent cost control. The objective should be long-term value for current and future consumers.

4. **Conditions for successful delivery**

Auction design, market interaction and consumer value
Competitive allocation, transparent auction parameters and credible delivery incentives should remain central. Strike prices and contract terms should reflect Northern Ireland's market conditions without transferring unnecessary risk to consumers.

Grid, planning and technical deliverability
Auction volumes and delivery dates must align with planning timelines, grid capacity and connection arrangements. The Department should consult the Transmission System Operator before determining the timing and volume of allocation rounds. Technical entry criteria must ensure that only deliverable projects compete.

Whole system and locational value
REPG should focus on delivered output and system value, not nominal capacity alone. The framework should clarify the territorial eligibility of supported generation and how location, connection nodes and network constraints may inform allocation design. Locational signals should be assessed against network reinforcement, constraint costs, security of supply and consumer value.

Financeable counterparty and clear institutional roles
The designated counterparty must be demonstrably financeable for the full life of REPG contracts. The Department, Utility Regulator, SONI, counterparty and industry require clearly defined roles. Ambiguity over the body undertaking system-operator functions should be removed, and delivery bodies should have the necessary statutory powers, licence provisions, resources and transparent cost recovery mechanisms.

Stable standard terms, oversight and disputes
Standard contractual terms support a level playing field. Any facility to modify them should be tightly defined, transparent and consistent with fairness and value for money. Monitoring, review and dispute-resolution responsibilities should be clearly assigned, including appointment, reporting, funding and cost recovery.

Proportionate information powers
Information-gathering powers should be confined to information that is necessary for the design, delivery and oversight of REPG. Requirements should be clearly defined and proportionate, preserve existing protections for confidential and commercially sensitive information, and prevent access from conferring an unfair commercial advantage.

Consultation and implementation certainty
Investors, developers and supply chains need early visibility of regulations, auction rules and terms and conditions. Material rules and later changes should be subject to meaningful consultation and appropriate notice. Ongoing engagement with SONI and other delivery bodies will be important on eligibility, metering, connections, location and auction capacity.

Community benefit
Community benefit arrangements should be transparent, fair and proportionate. They should strengthen local support without undermining project viability or materially increasing consumer costs.

5**. Conclusion**
Northern Ireland cannot afford further drift in establishing a credible renewable electricity support mechanism. The Bill as stated is a mere first step, it should proceed and REPG should advance on a clear, transparent and deliverable timetable. The desired outcome is not simply

more renewable capacity, but an investable, reliable and internationally competitive electricity system delivering long-term value for businesses and consumers.

For further information please contact:

