



Department for the

Economy

An Roinn

Geilleagair

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Peter McCallion
Clerk to the Committee for the Economy

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Adelaide House
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Our ref: [REDACTED]

Your Ref: [REDACTED]

Date: 22 06 2026

Dear Peter

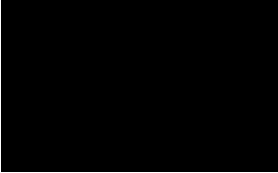
Hydrogen Policy

Further to your letter dated 12 June 2026, please see response below which has been cleared by Minister Archibald. In the event of a request for disclosure of information contained in this submission under the FOI Act, the request would be considered in the context of the relevant provisions of the legislation, including any relevant exemptions that may be applicable.

The Department's preferred policy position is to appoint the Utility Regulator as the economic regulator for hydrogen. There was strong support for this approach through the hydrogen policy consultation process, with 93% of respondents in favour.

Currently, under the Gas (Northern Ireland) Order 1996, the Utility Regulator's remit relates to gases made up wholly or mainly of methane. Legislative change is required to extend this remit to include oversight of pipelines transporting 100% hydrogen. This can be done through secondary legislation as set out in Article 3 (2)(b) of the Gas Order.

The committee sought views on whether the Utility Regulator (Support for Decarbonisation Preparation) Bill could be utilised to make necessary amendments. The Bill introduced to the Assembly is narrow in scope covering just one topic, it is the Department's understanding that such an amendment is likely to be inadmissible.



Yours sincerely



Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for the Economy

Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer
Department for the Economy

[Redacted]

Our Ref: [Redacted]

12 June 2026

Dear DALO,

Hydrogen Policy

Please accept the Committee's thanks for the oral and written evidence provided at the meeting of 10 June 2026 by Departmental officials in respect of the feedback to the hydrogen policy consultation.

Key issues discussed included: green hydrogen generation; electricity storage policy; use of dispatch down to generate green hydrogen; the Utility Regulator as the hydrogen regulator and the need for related legislation; the staff resources in the Department's Gas Group; the UK Government's refreshed Hydrogen Strategy; Hydrogen Allocation Round, Shared Island funding for hydrogen and the Net Zero Hydrogen Fund; the Hydrogen Training Academy; and hydrogen for home heating.

The Committee noted and supported the suggestion that the Utility Regulator should be provided with the vires to act as the regulator for hydrogen. The Committee therefore agreed to write to the Department seeking information on the consideration that has been given to using the Utility Regulator (Support for Decarbonisation Preparation) Bill as a vehicle to revise the powers of the Utility Regulator to include the regulation of hydrogen; and indicating the Committee's support for such a measure.

A written response on or before 26 June 2026 would be greatly appreciated. The Committee would also greatly appreciate any related background policy information that the Department can provide.

If you require further information or clarification in respect of the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Peter McCallion

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