

Reference: CERDocs/cer06190.pdf

10th November 2006

Mr. Paul Hogan
Commission for Energy Regulation
Plaza House
Belgard Road
Tallaght
Dublin 24

Email copy original sent by post

Dear Mr Hogan,

RE: MICRO-GENERATION CONSULTATION

I am writing to express the SDLP's concern about the proposal to effectively block micro-generation of electricity from domestic premises, small and medium enterprises and in community or church halls though the net metering proposals published in the micro-generation consultation.

Not paying people for the energy they produce, while charging for what they consume, will effectively kill the market for photovoltaic power, CHP and micro-wind units.

Whilst there is no such programme at the moment in the Republic, there are grants for these technologies in Northern Ireland, and their installation here is becoming increasingly common.

The proposals, as published, are therefore incompatible with the ethos of creating an all-island energy market.

It is our view that net metering should be the norm up to at least 5kw of installed capacity, as any other alternative (like dual metering) would cost more to install and administer than to simply allow a simple two way meter to be installed at the same time as the unit being installed.

This is a very important matter given the high number of people throughout the island living in fuel poverty. Photovoltaic installations for elderly people living alone can make an enormous difference to the quality of their lives in a net metering context. Anti fuel poverty programmes in the North are promoting this option as one of several including insulation, double glazing, and solar water integrated with new central heating systems.

For installed capacity of a higher amount, from 10kw up to 100kw, farms, businesses and social organisations should also be able to dual meter, and be paid more if they produce power at times needed by the grid.

The promotion of renewable sources will improve fuel security, reduce carbon emission and lead to job creation.

I trust that you will consider the issues raised in this letter and look forward to a response at your earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely

Tommy Gallagher MLA
SDLP spokesperson for the Environment