

Richard Johnston
Director of Agricultural Policy
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)
Clare House, 303 Airport Road West
Belfast
BT3 9ED

19 August 2026

Dear Mr Johnston,

The Climate Change Committee has been asked to provide advice on the Northern Ireland Just Transition Fund for Agriculture draft Regulations, in line with the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. The Committee welcomes this development and is supportive of the Northern Ireland Executive setting up the Just Transition Fund as per Section 31 of the Act.

We have reviewed the draft Regulations. On the basis of the draft Regulations alone, we are not able to assess whether the proposed Fund is appropriately designed to support the agriculture sector's contribution to Northern Ireland's statutory climate targets. This is because the Regulations contain limited information on the Fund's objectives, outcomes, and eligibility criteria, or how it is expected to contribute to delivery of the policies in Northern Ireland's Climate Action Plans.

The Regulations provide the administrative mechanisms through which financial assistance may be awarded, an approach which we appreciate ensures that the legislative framework is sufficiently flexible to support a range of measures in the future.

We understand that these matters are intended to be addressed through a supporting Policy Framework. As discussed in consultation with your team, we would welcome the opportunity to review the Policy Framework once sufficiently developed and ask that the Committee is consulted on it before the Policy Framework is finalised. Where the Regulations record that the Department requested and took account of the Committee's advice, it should be clear that our consideration of the Fund's contribution to Northern Ireland's climate objectives remains dependent on reviewing this wider framework.

Yours sincerely,



Nigel Topping CMG
Chair, Climate Change Committee