

TOP STORIES

ATTWOOD RESPONDS TO LONDON GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT TO ALLOW FRACKING TO RECOMMENCE

Environment Minister Alex Attwood today commented on the announcement by the London government that they are to allow hydraulic fracturing to recommence.

Alex Attwood said: **"I note the further position of the London government. However, I want to confirm that decisions on fracking in Northern Ireland are strictly for the Northern Ireland government. In particular, I have warned against a head long rush in to fracking and I repeat that today."**

"The planning and environment issues around any energy proposal fall to the Department of Environment (DOE). Those responsibilities will be robustly and faithfully honoured on any proposal for fracking. I will make sure that this applies to any action or proposal by Tamboran."

"There has been no planning application lodged to date. If one is forthcoming, it may be judged to be an Article 31, to be decided by the DOE minister. This has happened with other energy applications. Further, in the fullness of time, it may be decided that there should be a public inquiry. This has also happened with other energy applications."

"There is of course a wider and more fundamental issue. That is the question as to how safe is fracking. The science on this is still developing. Research is continuing in Europe, in America and on this island. It will be some time before that research is concluded. This is one of the crucial pieces that needs to be assessed when looking at the fracking picture. "

It is also of note that separately today a main adviser to the London and devolved governments – the Committee on Climate Change –advised that efforts should be concentrated on renewables in the future. I agree. Renewables is arguably Ireland's biggest economic opportunity – electricity self-sufficiency, net energy exporters, research and development jobs, engineering and manufacturing growth. We need to fully embrace this."

NI HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING RATE NOW ALMOST 40%

The 2011/12 NI Local Authority Collected (LAC) Municipal Waste Management Statistics Annual Report published today shows that household recycling and composting rates have continued to increase, reaching almost 40% in 2011/12.

This represents an increase of just under 2.5 percentage points on the previous year's rate and around a 12 percentage point increase in the last five years. It is also close to the current Waste Management Strategy target of a 40% household recycling rate to be achieved by 2015.

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For more information go to www.nienvironmentlink.org/news/NI-Recycling-Rate-Almost-40.php

HIGH AIR POLLUTION MONITORED IN PARTS OF NORTHERN IRELAND

High to very high levels of air pollution (particulate matter) are currently being monitored in the Armagh, Newry and Strabane areas.

In addition, Moderate levels of air pollution are being monitored in the Ballymena, Belfast, Lisburn and Derry/Londonderry areas. This localised air pollution is likely to be associated with the build-up of emissions from vehicles and home heating during the current calm, cold weather conditions experienced across Northern Ireland and could persist throughout the rest of today and Wednesday. The situation is forecast to improve with the arrival of more unsettled weather conditions from Thursday.

For more information go to www.nienvironmentlink.org/news/High-Air-Pollution-in-NI.php

COMMUNITIES TO BE REGENERATED BY £425,000 GRANT FROM COASTAL COMMUNITIES FUND

Environment Minister Alex Attwood has announced that communities in Glenarm and Magheramorne will be regenerated by a major grant from the UK-wide Coastal Communities Fund.

The £425,000 grant will allow community groups in both areas to press ahead with innovative regeneration projects – a craft visitor attraction and a project to bottle water.

Outlining how the funding will be used, Minister Attwood said: **“The Coastal Communities Fund, announced in February, is designed to support the economic development of communities along our coasts. It promotes sustainable economic growth and jobs allowing local people to respond to the changing economic needs and opportunities of their area.”**

“Coastal communities have a strong sense of place and a tradition of resilience and energy. These two projects are excellent examples of how funding can encourage and stimulate local initiative.”

For more information go to www.nienvironmentlink.org/news/Coastal-Community-Fund-425k.php

EFFICIENCY AIDS FUEL POVERTY

Energy efficiency measures are having a positive impact on fuel poverty – McCausland

Social Development Minister Nelson McCausland has welcomed an overall reduction in fuel poverty levels for Northern Ireland, following the

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publication of the latest Home Energy Conservation Authority (HECA) annual report.

The Survey reports that fuel poverty has reduced from 44% in 2009 to 42% in 2011, this equates to almost 14,000 less households in fuel poverty.

The Minister said: **“This past year alone, more than £37million has been invested on heating, insulation and double glazing to improve the energy efficiency of homes. These are investments that have made a real difference to the lives of thousands of people across Northern Ireland.”**

For more information go to www.nienvironmentlink.org/news/Efficiency-aids-fuel-Poverty.php

HUMPBACK WHALES OF IRELAND

It could almost be saying “I’m behind you”, but humpback whales aren’t known for pranking boatloads of whale watchers.

The mammals have been creating a stir off Baltimore in west Cork in the Irish Republic for the last two weeks as they feed on shoals of sprat and herring.

There are five animals in the humpback group and they have been getting a lot of attention, with reports in Ireland’s national newspapers and segments on the state broadcaster RTE.

The [Irish Whale and Dolphin Group](#) have been monitoring the group and believe that four of them have visited the same waters off west Cork in the past, some as recently as 2008.

For more information go to www.nienvironmentlink.org/news/Humpback-Whales-off-Ireland.php

UN CLIMATE TALKS KEY SUMMARY

After two weeks of talks, delegates at the UN climate talks in Qatar have reached an agreement. The **key points** of the climate talks and the ‘package deal’, dubbed the **Doha Climate Gateway** are:

- Second commitment period of the Kyoto pact will run from January 1, 2013 to the end of 2020, binding the 27–member European Union and 10 other industrialised nations, including Australia and Switzerland, to emission cuts.
- A call for Kyoto Protocol countries to review their emissions reduction target in line with the 25–40% range by 2014 at the latest.
- An agreed work program on ‘Loss and Damage’ from climate change to aid poorer countries to start immediately and a decision “to establish institutional arrangement, such as an international mechanism, at COP19” – Doha deal urges developed countries to announce pledges “when their financial circumstances permit”.

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- Parties reiterated their intention to draft a new, global pact by 2015 to replace the Kyoto Protocol from 2005
- Developed countries failed to agree a method to account for their carbon in a comparable way

For more information go to www.nienvironmentlink.org/news/UN-Climate-Talks-Key-Summary.php

NI POLICY

ASSEMBLY NEWS

The latest edition of Assembly News is available on the NIEL website www.nienvironmentlink.org/news/Assembly-News-November-2012.php

ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

- [Gas Fracking Approved](#)
- [No Ambition to Preserve Seas](#)
- [Climate Change Impacts in the News](#)
- [Ash Dieback – Guides and Maps](#)
- [Living Wetlands](#)
- [Ash Planting Aid Suspended](#)
- [Food Waste Plant Opens](#)
- [York Street Interchange](#)
- [Iron Age Helmet Found](#)
- [Hat Trick for Turbine](#)
- [Projects to improve Water](#)
- [Bread Prices set to Rise](#)
- [National Trust Members Urged To Lobby MLAs Over Planning](#)
- [CO2 Emissions are still too High](#)
- [NI Landfill Target Reached 1 year Early](#)
- [ECAR Project gets Euro Boost](#)
- [More Park and Ride Spaces](#)
- [Marine Energy Investments](#)
- [Belfast Rapid Transit Plans](#)
- [Pine Martens make a Comeback](#)
- [Carbon Target Delayed to 2016](#)
- [Chilling Weather Forecast](#)
- [From Source to Sea](#)
- [Talks Extend Kyoto Protocol](#)
- [Record Number at Open Days](#)
- [BATTERIE Launch in NI](#)
- [Edward Davy on Doha CC Conference](#)

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EVENTS

- [Some Female Saints of County Down](#)
- [Solstice Lectures](#)
- [Epilogues Training Programme](#)
- [Finding the 'I' in Collaboration](#)
- [Eco Seeds Training Workshop](#)
- [Northern Ireland Waste Conference](#)

For more information on events go to www.nienvironmentlink.org/events/

CONSULTATIONS

NIEL responded on behalf of members to a number of consultations during the past month they include:

- Onshore Wind Call for Evidence
- Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Strategic Plan 2012-2020
- European Territorial Cooperation 2014-2020 (Interreg & Peace)

Further information on these consultations can be obtained by contacting iona@nienvironmentlink.org

Over the coming months NIEL plan to submit responses on the following consultations

- Transforming Your Care: From Vision to Actions
- Proposed changes to the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation (NIRO) – Supplementary Consultation on Large Scale Solar PV and Biomass Sustainability
- Consultation On Permitted Development and Agricultural Buildings

PUBLICATIONS

GETTING THE MOST FROM DATA

Report from the “Getting the Most from Data” State of the Environment Reporting Stakeholder Workshop held in Lough Neagh Discovery Centre on the 15th November 2012. To read the report click on the following link www.nienvironmentlink.org/cmsfiles/files/events/SOE-Stakeholder-Workshop-Report-Nov-2012.pdf

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WASTE MANAGEMENT STATISTICS REPORT

The Provisional Northern Ireland Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Management Statistics report for April - June 2012 has been published by the Department of the Environment.

This publication provides information on local authority collected municipal waste collected from household and non-household sources and the levels of recycling in Northern Ireland. The information presented relates to April - June 2012.

This publication can be accessed on the Department of the Environment website: http://www.doeni.gov.uk/environment_statistics.htm



Northern Ireland Environment Link staff would like to wish all our members and friends a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.