

Michelle O'Neill, First Minister of Northern Ireland  
Emma Little-Pengelly, deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland  
Northern Ireland Assembly  
GD36 Stormont Castle  
Stormont Estate  
Belfast

10 December 2025

By email only

### **Environmental Progress in Northern Ireland**

Dear First Minister and Deputy First Minister,

I am writing to you in my capacity as CEO of Northern Ireland Environment Link, the networking and forum body for non-statutory organisations concerned with the natural and built environment of Northern Ireland. Our 70 Full Members (See below) represent 190,000 individuals, 262 subsidiary groups, have an annual turnover of £70 million and manage over 314,000 acres of land.

As I am sure you are aware, our natural environment continues to suffer from ongoing Climate, Biodiversity and Water quality emergencies as highlighted by the algal blooms witnessed at Lough Neagh in recent years. However, whilst numerous debates over recent years within the Northern Ireland Assembly have backed calls for immediate action to address these threats to our health, environment and economy, little progress has been achieved.

As representatives of the environmental sector in Northern Ireland, we are increasingly concerned that with approximately only 500 days left of this Assembly mandate that much work remains if NI is to meet its environmental obligations and commitments.

As it is our understanding that much of the legislation, policies and structures required to bring about significant environment improvement is currently awaiting Executive approval, we request that you and your Ministerial colleagues take urgent, substantial and holistic action to meet our commitments and halt further decline of our natural environment. In particular, we would appreciate Executive progress on the following:

- Executive approval of the NI Green Growth Strategy;
- Establishment of a Just Transition Commission as required by the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022;
- Creation of an Independent Environmental Protection Agency as committed to under 'New Decade, New Approach' and supported again in a recent Assembly debate (10<sup>th</sup> November 2025);
- Progression of the Fisheries and Water Environment Bill.

We believe that progression of these issues would not only represent a timely intervention by the Executive but also provide a strong demonstration to society of the importance that the Executive and NI society place upon our precious habitats.

Yours sincerely,



Max Bryant, CEO – Northern Ireland Environment Link

**NIEL signatories:**

