



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs

OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

Common Fisheries Policy (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit)
(No. 2) Regulations 2020: Department of Agriculture,
Environment and Rural Affairs

15 October 2020

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

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Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

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Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Mr Declan McAleer (Chairperson)
Mr Philip McGuigan (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Clare Bailey
Mrs Rosemary Barton
Mr John Blair
Mr Maurice Bradley
Mr Harry Harvey
Mr William Irwin
Mr Patsy McGlone

Witnesses:

Mr Ciaran Cunningham	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
Mr Patrick Smith	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
Mr David Steele	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

The Chairperson (Mr McAleer): I welcome, via StarLeaf, David Steele from the fisheries Bill team, Patrick Smith, a deputy principal in the sea fisheries policy and grants branch, and Ciaran Cunningham, the grade 7 acting head of the marine and fisheries transition team. I want you to take around 10 minutes to give an overview of the regulations, after which members will ask questions.

Mr David Steele (Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs): Thanks very much, Chair. With your permission, I will take some time to set the scene for CFP/20. The Committee should be in possession of a written briefing that the Department provided at the end of last week. Essentially, that briefing sets out where we were with DEFRA's drafting of CFP/20, as of Friday past, which is less than a week ago. We sent it to the Committee in an effort to keep you updated on what has been a constantly changing picture on CFP/20. It was clearly right and proper that the Committee should be kept informed about what was happening with this SI. However, at that time — last Friday — we were simply not in a position to guarantee that CFP/20 would be in sufficiently finalised form to present a further paper on its detail to the Committee this morning. I am conscious that Committee members still do not have that second paper in front of them in order to discuss the detail of the SI. Over the past few days, we have worked to develop that further paper, but, unfortunately, we have been unable to get it to the Committee in time for today's meeting. I am afraid that the clock beat us.

I know that I am unable to get into the detail of the SI because you do not have that second paper in front of you. However, when the Committee sees it, you will find that CFP/20 is a much-reduced

version of what DEFRA had intended initially. That is entirely down to the time constraints that were faced by DEFRA. Unfortunately, as we can see, those time pressures have had an impact on us all. I can only apologise that that is the position, but I cannot emphasise enough that that is completely outside of the Department's control.

You mentioned that, because of the changes that DEFRA has made to the SI, it advised us that it will have a new title. You said that it will be the Common Fisheries Policy (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) (No. 2) Regulations 2020. The "No. 2" in the title will distinguish it from the title of the CFP/12 SI, which the Committee noted at its meeting on 1 October. I mention that here simply for the Committee's information and in moving forward. I hope that that explains quite candidly where we find ourselves with CFP/20. We will, of course, get the detail on the SI to the Committee as soon as we can.

The Chairperson (Mr McAleer): Thank you. Patsy, did you indicate that you wanted to speak?

Mr McGlone: No, I had not indicated that I wished to speak. My hand was not lowered from the last time. Thank you.

The Chairperson (Mr McAleer): I thank the officials. Given that the template for the SI has not been received, the Committee cannot consider it.