

# Government accused of failing to meet microgeneration deadline

Tuesday 13 July 2010

**Climate change minister Greg Barker was last night (July 12) forced to respond to allegations that the government has missed its deadline for introducing permitted development rights - which remove the need for a planning application - for micro-wind turbines and air source heat pumps.**

During the Micropower Council's summer reception in London, which was timed to coincide with the government's launch of the new Micropower Strategy for consultation yesterday ([see this NewEnergyFocus.com story](#)), the chief executive of the Council, Dave Sowden, began his speech with a

scathing attack on the government for "breaking the law".

He said: "The government broke the law today. The Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) failed to comply with a statutory deadline to introduce micro-wind and domestic heat pumps into the planning system.

"I am sure government officials are going to sort this out but it does draw into question what role Parliament has if it pushes laws through that government then ignores. We don't blame you for that Greg - but do put pressure on the CLG to sort this out as we have all had enough."

While Mr Barker, as a minister within the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), is not directly responsible for the issue, he claimed at the event that the government was absolutely committed to sorting it out and said the delay was down to a "logistical consequence of a new government".

He said: "I know you are eagerly awaiting the introduction of permitted development rights and I can assure you that this government is absolutely committed to laying this right and it will be laid in Parliament before the summer recess.

"Work is progressing at full speed to introduce these rights."

## CLG

In a statement released to NewEnergyFocus.com today, a spokesman from the CLG confirmed Mr Barker's sentiments and said: "The new government is committed to introducing permitted development rights for small domestic wind turbines and air source heat pumps, as part of our agenda of supporting renewable energy, microgeneration and a low carbon economy. We will be bringing secondary legislation to Parliament shortly before the summer recess.



Chief executive of the Micropower Council, Dave Sowden, claimed the CLG yesterday failed to comply with a statutory deadline to introduce PD rights for microgeneration

"The small delay is just a logistical consequence of the change of government and the need to analyse the consultation responses to the complex issues, but we want to reassure the industry that we will be moving ahead quickly."

## **RHI**

At the event, Mr Barker also used his speech to reaffirm that, while the government is not yet in a position to make an announcement on the future of the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI), it has an ambitious agenda on renewable heat and will be making an announcement on whether the proposed subsidy scheme will go ahead as soon as possible.

He claimed that the delay was due to the government wanting to make sure it gets the RHI right 'first time round' and because it needs to ask questions about the scheme that he claimed were ignored by the previous government.

"I was quite surprised to see how little the previous government had done to flesh out the bones of what the RHI would need to be going forward", he said.

"Renewable heat is an absolutely essential part of our strategy if we are going to meet the 2020 targets but we have to ask some questions that the previous government ignored if we are going to meet this target."

Mr Barker added that the worst possible scenario would be to introduce a sub-optimal scheme, like Labour did with the Renewables Obligation (RO), which would then need to come back to government to be "tinkled with".

"We want to get this right first time round. I hope you can bear with us while we do that", he said.

This came after Mr Sowden had stressed that the confidence of the industry is being tested to the limit in the absence of a government announcement on the RHI, claiming it has implications for jobs and the wider industry.

## **Microgeneration**

On the future of microgeneration and the new Strategy that has been published for consultation, Mr Barker claimed he was delighted to have been involved in helping to move towards decentralised energy and said the government needs an ambitious new vision to ensure the sector is not sidelined.

He said: "Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference and I have been a strong and some might say deranged supporter of decentralised energy for years so I am delighted to do something about this agenda.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank Peter Ainsworth - it was he who introduced the passage of what's now the Green Energy Act, which calls for a consultation on a new Microgeneration Strategy. What we really need is an ambitious new culture in government and new vision and that for me is a vision that doesn't sideline microgeneration to a little sector."