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17 February 2009

Mr Iain Osborne
NIAUR
Queens House
10-14 Queens Street
Belfast
BT1 6ER

Dear Iain

I write in response to your letter to Douglas McIlldoon, dated 11 February 2009, which has subsequently been published on your website.

The Consumer Council is currently considering the issues you raised with respect to Douglas McIlldoon's report, and will respond to you in due course on these matters.

However, I feel compelled to write to you today to clarify the Consumer Council's position to competition, due to the number of people copied into the letter. I am concerned that our views may have been misinterpreted following the comment in your letter, "...our contacts with CCNI..... leave us convinced that there is a strong desire to see more competition".

We are on record to your office, through our response to NIAUR's consultation on *Electricity and Gas Retail Market Competition in Northern Ireland* and through subsequent discussions, as stating that while we recognise the benefits to competition, it cannot come at any price.

We accept that consumers may receive benefits in a competitive market, such as innovative products and improved customer service. However we are fundamentally opposed to consumers simply having to pay more to have a competitive market.

I trust this clarifies our position on this matter and that you will take the necessary measures to accurately reflect our view. If not can you please advise us if and when this action will take place?

I have copied this letter to Douglas McIlldoon, and to both Mark Durkan and Jenny Pyper, whom you had copied into your original letter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'E. Gill', followed by a period.

ELEANOR GILL

Chief Executive

cc: Mark Durkan, MP, MLA, Chairman, ETI Committee
Jenny Pyper, Head of Energy Division, DETI
Douglas McIlldoon