



The Consumer Council

Elizabeth House,
116 Holywood Road,
Belfast BT4 1NY
Tel 028 9067 2488
Fax 028 9065 7701
e mail info@consumercouncil.org.uk

5 January 2011

Ref: PD20010730

Lesley Robinson
Utility Regulator
Queen's House
14 Queens Street
Belfast
BT1 6ED

Dear Lesley,

Re: Consultation on proposed gas licence (ONI Gas Ltd)

The Consumer Council is a Non-Departmental Public Body set up in legislation to safeguard the interests of all consumers, and particularly the vulnerable and disadvantaged. The Consumer Council is an independent organisation which operates to promote and protect the consumer interest.

We welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation on the proposal to grant a gas supply licence to ONI Gas Limited.

The Consumer Council has no objection to the Utility Regulator granting a licence to supply gas to ONI Gas Limited.

With fuel poverty levels at 44 per cent in Northern Ireland many households are struggling to adequately heat their home. It is important that competition will bring benefits to consumers, ultimately through lower prices.

The Consumer Council would like the Utility Regulator to continue to work with them to ensure healthy competition in the Northern Ireland natural gas supply market. In particular the Consumer Council would like assurances that competition will benefit all consumers.

The Consumer Council will work with the new supplier and the Utility Regulator to develop fit for purpose codes of practice as required by the licence. However, the Consumer Council are mindful of the Utility Regulator's forward work programme and IME 3 and would like to ensure that new supply

licences issued will take account of any legislation changes and the introduction of any new codes of practice.

I hope that these comments are helpful and are given due consideration. Please contact me if you require any clarification.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'R. Williams', with a stylized, flowing script.

Richard Williams
Senior Consumer Affairs Officer