

SWS Forestry

Good morning,

I am writing to you to stress the necessity for an immediate change in the appeals process and a beefing up of the FAC resources.

We have numerous afforestation and thinning sites at present where we have invested in NIS and waited for over 18 months to secure our licence and now we are finding the most of them going into appeals.

We have done everything which was expected of us, sold the concept to the client, consulted with the department inspectorate and others, paid for NIS to be undertaken and when the approval issued we have to deal with the appeals procedure which is outside our control. This appeal process is not fit for purpose and needs to change immediately to allow the industry to stay afloat. We are presently trying to secure an autumn planting programme after a disastrous spring programme. The figures and the plant sales speak for themselves.

We have felling licences held up for over 18 months and now we feel that by the time the licence is granted these plantations will be gone beyond the safe thinning time and the recommended critical top height to try and prevent windblow.

Who will compensate the forest owners for these injustices.?

This FAC appeal process is absurd and not fit for purposes. We have 2 cases this morning, one from the serial objector and the other from a neighbour whom does not want to see the land planted, both of these cases will now wait for months if not years for a decision from FAC. Will the landowner be still interested????

We need change, we need reform and we need it now.

Please do not what has been done in the past, drag reform out for months and years, we will not survive that long, we are hanging on with our finger tips, **our existence is in your hands please do not let us fall and fail.**

Regards,

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