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14<sup>th</sup> March 2012

Dear Sir/Madam,

**SECOND CONSULTATION ON ASSESSMENT OF FUTURE MOBILE COMPETITION AND PROPOSALS FOR THE AWARD OF 800 MHZ AND 2.6 GHZ SPECTRUM AND RELATED ISSUES**

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the above consultation. The Ulster Farmers' Union (UFU) is the largest farming organisation in Northern Ireland representing over 11,000 farming families. The UFU represents farmers from all areas in Northern Ireland and across all sectors and as such would like to make the following comments:

Our members have cited several examples of disparate broadband and mobile phone coverage across rural NI. Given lack of access to public services, the UFU would argue that rural areas need more reliable, quality telecommunications coverage than that of urban areas.

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development are trying to encourage more online submission of applications/documents by farmers but this is unfair and totally unsatisfactory if sufficient broadband coverage does not exist.

In Section 5.53 under the preferred option, the UFU would support the implementation of Approach B as discussed in the consultation document, as we view this will be of most benefit to rural areas.

I trust these comments will be fully considered. If you wish to discuss further please do not hesitate to get in contact.

Yours sincerely

Leanne Wilson

Policy Officer