

From: Nicholas Cotter

Sent: 26/09/2014 03:51

To: McNally, Paul

Subject: Our meeting yesterday at the ploughing - proposal re non-contributory Old Age Pension disregard

Dear Minister,

Thank you for taking to time to meet with us yesterday at the ploughing. I mentioned a possible change that could be made to the new forestry programme which I believe would be very beneficial if you can deliver it, namely, that 'the Government will disregard 100% of the forestry premium for the purposes of calculating entitlement to the non-contributory Old Age Pension under the new Afforestation and Premium Scheme 2015 onwards'

This change is justified on the grounds that:

1. Current rule on additional income is stopping land being planted - as it currently stands there are a significant portion of farmers over 65 in receipt of a non-contributory old age pension (NCOAP) who will not plant because any additional income earned (forestry premiums) will be deducted from their NCOAP which means that there is no financial benefit for them to plant and they consequently will not plant.
2. Changing this rule for recipients of NCOAP will not create any loss of revenue to the Exchequer – There will be no loss to Revenue if this rule is changed. It will simply free up an additional significant segment of land for planting.
3. The concept of an income disregard is not new - there already exists the precedent of income disregards when assessing an individual for social welfare support.
4. It is the lowest cost additional measure the Government can introduce to increase the planting programme – There is not net cost to the Exchequer to introduce this measure. In essence it carries the same cost as the proposed abolition of the non-farmer rate of premium and allowing non-farmers to get the 'farmer rate', zero cost.

I hope this note is of benefit for the purposes of making this zero cost additional change that will free up a significant additional area of land for afforestation. If you have any further questions on the proposal above or if I can be of assistance in any way please revert.

Thank you once again for your help and support for Nick and Jack and their firewood business,

Kind Regards,

Nicholas Cotter – Director

Mid Western Forestry Svc Ltd, Abbeyfeale, Co Limerick.

Tel: +353 (68) 32266

Mob: 087 2538928

Web: www.ireland-forestry.com

Loc8 code: QY9-38-B43

<http://www.myloc8ion.com/QY9-38-B43>