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Lord Alderdice  
House of Lords  
LONDON  
SW1A 0AA

13 January 1998

Dear John

**NORTHERN IRELAND LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMME**

As I indicated in June, I intend to continue the practice where, as the new Parliamentary term begins, the Government sets out its intentions regarding the legislative programme for Northern Ireland.

The attached Annex details progress expected on the 3 Northern Ireland Bills and on Orders in Council up until the Summer recess.

The Annex also gives details of:

- i. those Orders in Council that completed their Parliamentary stages in the pre-Christmas term;
- ii. those draft Orders which we plan to bring before Parliament in the current session;



iii. those Proposals which we intend to publish; and

iv. negative resolutions stemming from GB Bills.

If, as I hope they will, the talks produce a comprehensive negotiated outcome by May, we can also anticipate a need for urgent legislation to conduct a referendum.

As always, my Ministerial colleagues and I will be happy to discuss any comments you may have on the proposed programme. I should also like to take this opportunity to remind you that the Northern Ireland Grand Committee remains available if you would find it helpful to discuss any of the Proposals for draft Orders or any other matter relating to Northern Ireland.

I am sending copies of this letter and its enclosure to all Northern Ireland and Opposition Spokespersons and to the President of the Council.

MARJORIE MOWLAM

## ANNEX

NORTHERN IRELAND BILLS1. **Police (Northern Ireland) Bill**Purpose

To increase the accountability and effectiveness of the RUC and Police Authority in line with the Government's May 1996 proposals and the recommendations in the Hayes Report on reforming police complaints procedures.

Parliamentary Stages - Easter Term

The Police (Northern Ireland) Bill is likely to go into Committee stage at the beginning of February. The Committee Stage is likely to last 6-8 weeks. Commons Report Stage may take place before Easter depending on a number of factors.

2. **Public Processions etc (Northern Ireland) Bill**Purpose

To amend the law of Northern Ireland relating to public processions by implementing recommendations contained in the North Report presented to the Secretary of State in January 1997.

Parliamentary Stages - Easter Term

The Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Bill is due to go into Committee in the House of commons on 15 January. It is expected to be ready for Royal Assent at the beginning of February.

3. **Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill**Purpose

To extend the life of the existing Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1996, with amendments.

Parliamentary Stages - Easter Term

Scheduled to receive Second Reading in House of Lords on 12 January. bill should be enacted in good time, perhaps even before the Easter recess. As this bill makes provision for the 1998 renewal

requirements to be waived, if the Bill is enacted before 15 June 1998, the next EPA renewal debates will be in June 1999.

ORDERS COMPLETED IN PRE-CHRISTMAS TERM - 1997.

ALD2/2/6/12/1/12

TITLE AND PURPOSE OF ORDER	PROPOSAL PUBLISHED	DATES OF DEBATES
<p><b>Shops (Sunday Trading etc.) (NI) Order</b> - To replace the Shops Act (NI) 1946 and bring the Northern Ireland shops law into line with the law in England and Wales, the Sunday Trading Act 1994.</p>	<p>15 September 1997</p>	<p>House of Commons - 12 November 1997 House of Lords - 20 November 1997</p>
<p><b>Deregulation (NI) Order</b> - To replicate provisions being taken forward in GB under the order making powers in the Deregulation and Contracting-Out Act 1994, as appropriate, and take any other non-parity action considered appropriate to the purpose of the Order</p>	<p>13 December 1996</p>	<p>House of Commons - 18 November 1997 House of Lords - 4 December 1997</p>
<p><b>Waste &amp; Contaminated Land (NI) Order</b> - To provide a new system of waste management based on that in GB. To provide new powers to deal with contaminated land and to provide the statutory basis for compliance with EC waste framework and related directives.</p>	<p>14 February 1996</p>	<p>House of Commons - 20 November 1997 House of Lords - 20 November 1997</p>
<p><b>Industrial Pollution Control (NI) Order</b> - To provide for a new system of air pollution control from industrial processes to be enforced by a Government Inspectorate and District Councils.</p>	<p>11 March 1996</p>	<p>House of Commons - 20 November 1997 House of Lords - 20 November 1997</p>

TITLE AND PURPOSE OF ORDER	PROPOSAL PUBLISHED	DATES OF DEBATES
<i>Civil Evidence (NI) Order</i> - To implement the recommendations of the Law Reform Advisory Committee for Northern Ireland in its Report on Hearsay Evidence in Civil Proceedings.	19 June 1997	House of Commons - 26 November 1997 House of Lords - 4 December 1997
<i>Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act Commencement Order</i>		House of Commons - 3 December 1997 House of Lords - 17 December 1997

**NEGATIVE RESOLUTIONS COMPLETED BEFORE CHRISTMAS RECESS:**

Health and Personal Social Services (Private Finance) (Northern Ireland) Order.

**FORTHCOMING ORDERS IN THE 1997/1998 PROGRAMME.**

TITLE AND PURPOSE OF ORDER	PROPOSAL PUBLISHED	DRAFT ORDER TO BE LAID
<p><b>Road Traffic (New Drivers) (NI) Order</b> - To introduce a system of re-testing drivers who commit endorsable road traffic offences while still inexperienced. In particular, the Order will provide that drivers who accumulate two penalty points within a probationary period of 2 years of passing their first driving test would lose their entitlement to drive (other than as a learner under a provisional licence) until they pass a further driving test.</p>	<p>26 June 1997</p>	<p>Laid 11 December 1997</p>
<p><b>Activity Centres (Young Persons' Safety) (NI) Order</b> - To introduce provisions relating to adventure activities licensing similar to those contained in the Activities Centres (Young Persons' Safety) Act 1995 which introduced a mandatory licensing scheme.</p>	<p>30 May 1997</p>	<p>Laid 25 November 1997 Standing Committee debate 14 January 1998</p>
<p><b>Museums and Galleries (NI) Order</b> - To establish a new merged museum institution for Northern Ireland.</p>	<p>18 March 1997</p>	<p>Laid 25 November 1997 Standing Committee debate 10 December 1997, affirmed by the Commons 15 December 1997</p>

TITLE AND PURPOSE OF ORDER	PROPOSAL PUBLISHED	DRAFT ORDER TO BE LAID
<p><b>Family Homes &amp; Domestic Violence (NI) Order</b> - To improve the civil remedies available for the protection against domestic violence and occupation rights of the family home, taking account of both new legislation in England and Wales (the Family Law Act 1996) and Northern Ireland experience.</p>	<p>27 June 1996</p>	<p>Laid 11 December 1997</p>
<p><b>Financial Provisions (NI) Order</b> - Miscellaneous Financial Provisions</p>	<p>Shortened procedure</p>	<p>Laid 16 December</p>
<p><b>Criminal Justice (Children)(NI) Order</b> - The Order will update the law relating to juvenile offenders, including changes to the disposals available to the Court. It will introduce determinate sentences to be followed by periods of close supervision.</p>	<p>6 February 1997</p>	<p>Order to be laid in February 1998</p>
<p><b>Appropriation (NI) Order 1998</b> - To give effect to 1997/98 Spring Supplementary Estimates and Vote on Account for 1998/99.</p>	<p>Shortened procedure</p>	<p>To be laid 12 February 1998</p>
<p><b>Local Government (NI) Order</b> - To repeal the DOE's power to designate District Councils which have provided adequate sites for travellers in their area. To replace specific powers to move travellers with more general powers to move on all unauthorised campers.</p>	<p>26 February 1997</p>	<p>Summer Term 1998</p>



TITLE AND PURPOSE OF ORDER	PROPOSAL PUBLISHED	DRAFT ORDER TO BE LAID
<i>Water (NI) Order</i> - To update existing water legislation to take account of technical advances and EU developments.	February 1998	October 1998
<i>Fire Services (Amendment)(NI) Order</i> - To enable the introduction of a new Firemen's Pension Scheme by early 1998.	7 November 1997	March 1998
<i>Health and Safety at Work (Amendment)(NI) Order</i> - To provide for the establishment of an executive NDPB to carry out the functions presently exercisable by the Health & Safety Division of the Department of Economic Development, the Health & Safety Agency for NI (an existing NDPB) and Employment Medical Advisory Service.	February 1998	Before Christmas Recess 1998
<i>Appropriation (No 2)(NI) Order</i> - To give effect to the 1998/99 Main Estimates	Shortened procedure	Summer Term 1998
<i>Trustee (Amendment)(NI) Order</i> - To repeal the provisions of Trustee (Amendment) Act (NI) 1962.	March 1998	Autumn Term 1998

ALD2/2/6/12/1/17

**TITLE AND PURPOSE OF ORDER**

**PROPOSAL PUBLISHED**

**DRAFT ORDER TO BE LAID**

**Housing (NI) Order** - To amend the legislation governing Housing Council nominations to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive Board and introduce new rights for NIHE tenants to have repairs carried out and receive compensation for improvements which they have made to their homes. To extend the NIHE's vesting powers to enable it to acquire land for improving the amenities of a housing area and introduce a form of qualifying shorthold tenancy for housing associations.

It will also include provisions for making the Private Sector Grants Scheme largely discretionary, provide for new duties to persons accepted as homeless, introduce additional grounds for re-possession and obtaining injunctions in cases of anti-social neighbours.

September 1998

Summer term 1999

**Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) (NI) Order** - To implement the EC Directive 94/62/EC on Packaging Waste.

March 1998

July 1998

**Dogs (NI) Order** - To amend the Dogs (NI) Order 1983 to allow the courts a degree of discretion to exempt from destruction, in exceptional circumstances, a dog which has attacked people or livestock.

After Easter Recess 1998

Before Christmas Recess 1998

TITLE AND PURPOSE OF ORDER	PROPOSAL PUBLISHED	DRAFT ORDER TO BE LAID
<p><b>Rates (Amendment)(NI) Order-</b> To remove the Crown's immunity from liability for rates in line with GB, amend the definition of "public supply undertaking" in the 1977 Order to include sewage treatment works, provide rate relief for certain shops and post offices in rural areas, and for fishing and shooting rights and make other amendments</p>	<p>After Easter Recess 1998</p>	<p>Before Christmas Recess 1998</p>
<p><b>Energy Efficiency (NI) Order -</b> To provide a statutory basis for expenditure on efficiency promotion in the domestic, industrial and public sectors</p>	<p>Shortened procedure</p>	<p>Autumn term 1998</p>
<p><b>Deregulation (NI) Order-</b> To remove or reduce statutory burdens on business or others, whilst ensuring that any necessary protection is maintained.</p>	<p>Before Summer Recess 1998</p>	<p>Before Christmas Recess 1998</p>
<p><b>Regeneration and Development (NI) Order -</b> To extend the powers contained in the Social Need (NI) Order 1986 to cover expenditure on the promotion of events and other activities and to provide grants and other assistance for regeneration and other development.</p>	<p>June 1998</p>	<p>January 1999</p>

TITLE AND PURPOSE OF ORDER	PROPOSAL PUBLISHED	DRAFT ORDER TO BE LAID
<p><b>Education (M) Order</b> - To replicate for NI some of the provisions of recent GB Bills, in particular in relation to , Primary School Class sizes, the Establishment of a General Teaching Council, Qualifications for Heads. The preparation of school development plans and setting targets for schools to raise standards. It will also give effect to Ministerial decisions to transfer responsibility for the funding of Grant Maintained Integrated Schools and Voluntary grammar schools from the Department of Education to the Area Boards and a reduction in funding to prep departments of Grammar Schools.</p>	17 December 1997	Summer term 1998
<p><b>Public Passenger Vehicles (NI) Order</b> - To introduce for the first time in Northern Ireland, certificates of fitness required for use of Public Service Vehicles and to update provisions relating to the conduct of drivers and passengers on such vehicles.</p>		Subject to the resolution of policy issues

**NEGATIVE RESOLUTIONS IN GB BILLS**

<b>TITLE OF NORTHERN IRELAND ORDER:</b>	<b>TITLE OF BILL:</b>
Right to Study (Northern Ireland) Order	Teaching & Higher Education Bill
Public Interest Disclosure (Northern Ireland) Order	Public Interest Disclosure Bill
Employment Rights (Dispute Resolution)(Northern Ireland) Order	Employment Rights Dispute Resolution Bill
Education (Student Loans) (Northern Ireland) Order	Education-: Student Loans Bill
Education (Student Support) (Northern Ireland) Order	Teaching & Higher Education Bill
Social Security (Northern Ireland) Order	Social Security Bill