

**Subject:** Submissions on review of S40 of Wildlife Act - Burning/Cutting Controls Public Consultation

To whom it concerns,

I only received notice by default yesterday that this consultation was taking place, not sure who was circulated as part of this consultation but all local authorities and Chief Fire Officers should have been directly consulted. Approx 5-10% of my fire service budget is spent annually in dealing with bog/gorse/forest fires so it is very relevant for us.

In relation to the specific questions regarding the burning of vegetation:

- a) There should be some flexibility in relation to the dates of March 1 to August 31, depending on the type of weather during the early spring. The early date should definitely not be extended beyond March 31 as April is statistically the driest month of the year generally.
- b) It may be appropriate to consider different closed periods for burning as opposed to hedge cutting.
- c) In terms of burning when a fire catches on in vegetation or in upland areas and there is a good breeze going it makes little difference if the land is enclosed or unenclosed. So the answer here is no.
- d) We have successfully implemented a controlled burning policy here in Leitrim and landowners are aware of its existence – this is in effect a licencing for burning regime. Sometimes it operates within the closed periods but it has worked well, because farmers are afraid of getting large fire bills for the fire service turning out. So I would be in favour of operating a licencing for burning policy even during the closed periods but under strict conditions.
- e) I would agree that some flexibility should be allowed for dates to be changed by statutory instrument or by Ministerial order given the particular set of circumstances in any given year. If there was a very dry spring period it should limit any burning to an earlier time. In this way farmers would be alerted by public campaigns that the burning period was being limited or extended so it would be beneficial all round.

Hope this is of assistance.

Regards,

Finian Joyce

Chief Fire Officer,

Leitrim County Council