



24 Nov 2022

To:

The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

CC:

The Rt Hon Thérèse Coffey MP, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

The Rt Hon Graham Stuart MP, Minister for Energy and Climate

Re: Clean, cheap energy in England

Dear Grant Shapps,

We are writing to you to express our great concern at the government's refusal to allow clean, cheap renewable energy projects in England. The UK is facing interlinked climate, energy and cost of living crises of unprecedented gravity, which place our environment, economy and society at serious risk. It therefore beggars belief that, in addition to refusing to remove the planning blocks on onshore wind in England, the government is also discussing bringing in barriers to solar energy.

The evidence is very clear that onshore wind and solar are not just the quickest and cheapest forms of energy available, but are also highly popular across the country, including in England, in every constituency and with Conservative voters.¹ These planning restrictions will add to hard-pressed households' energy costs and maintain the UK's reliance on expensive, polluting gas, as well as increasing our emissions. They also deprive communities, businesses and farmers across England of the freedom to develop local clean energy projects, which would help business and farms to survive and communities to prosper at a time of serious economic hardship. Farmers alone face losses of more than £1bn over two years from this ban.²

¹www.survation.com/polling-in-every-constituency-in-britain-shows-strong-support-for-building-wind-farms-to-drive-down-consumer-bills/

² <https://eciu.net/media/press-releases/2022/farmers-could-be-denied-1-billion-from-solar-generation>

Policies banning or blocking renewables are completely out of step with what the UK public wants, with what our economy and our climate urgently need, with our international climate commitments and with the government's own net zero policy, including to achieve a net zero grid by 2035. The Climate Change Committee has set out that the UK's onshore wind and solar capacity will need to double or triple by 2030 to get power decarbonisation on track,³ while the government's recent Energy Security Strategy planned for a five-fold increase in solar by 2035. A virtual ban on new onshore renewables in England would make these vital targets unachievable – and would also make it very difficult to “level up” communities in England.

Instead of these bans, the government should urgently bring in a sensible planning system which allows appropriately sited wind and solar projects which support nature to be developed across the UK, including in England, ideally with community involvement and support. As a first step, the government should immediately remove the ban on new onshore wind projects in England, and commit to not bringing in any blocks to solar.

If new renewable energy projects are essentially blocked across England by the maintenance of the virtual ban on onshore wind and the introduction of a virtual ban on solar, this will show that this government refuses to embrace the clean economy of the future. It is indefensible to allow dirty, dangerous and expensive sources of energy for longer than is necessary when all economic, environmental and security metrics make it clear that we need to switch to clean, cheap power.

We would request an urgent meeting with you to discuss our concerns, and how a sensible planning system for renewable energy across the UK would support communities, local businesses and the UK economy.

Yours,

Possible
Community Energy England
Fuel Poverty Action
Greenpeace UK
End Fuel Poverty Coalition
The Wildlife Trusts
Uplift
Save the Children UK
Ashden
Global Witness

³www.theccc.org.uk/2020/03/03/ccc-welcomes-government-re-commitment-to-onshore-wind-and-solar

The RSPB
Friends of the Earth England Wales & Northern Ireland
WWF UK
Climate Emergency UK
38 Degrees
REA
Zero Hour
Rights Community Action
Climate Cymru
UK100