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28 March 2022

The Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP
Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

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

Dear Mr Kwarteng and Mr Gove,

We call on the government to unblock onshore wind and increase our clean energy supply.

We are writing to you to express our concern about the ongoing impacts on people across the UK of the skyrocketing energy prices caused by continuing reliance on fossil fuels. We urge you to act quickly to increase the UK's supply of renewable energy to protect our energy security and independence, as well as the climate. We welcome recent reports that the government is considering replacing the planning barriers blocking new onshore wind power in England with a more proportionate system, and urge you to move forwards on this. It is clear that the current planning system is effectively a ban and is not fit for purpose, with the number of projects able to come forwards under this system dropping by 97%.¹

¹ <https://info.uwe.ac.uk/news/UWENews/news.aspx?id=4220>

Onshore wind energy is clean, cheap and popular across the UK, with BEIS polling finding that 80% of people support it.² 70% of people agree that the local planning system should support the construction of clean energy projects like onshore wind.³ At present, the planning system places barriers on new onshore wind projects in England that are more restrictive than for any other type of project, including fossil fuels, and which require the impossibly high bar of unanimous local consent. 80% of people agree that wind projects should be able to go ahead if they have majority local support, including 82% of Conservative voters.⁴

Expanding the UK's supply of renewable electricity from our own abundant domestic wind, wave and solar resources would help to end reliance on imported gas as quickly as possible. It would also attract economic investment and create good jobs. Making better use of our own clean energy resources would cut electricity bills for consumers and businesses as well as cutting emissions, with electricity from new onshore wind projects costing six times less than from gas power stations.⁵ Onshore wind energy is now so cheap that it does not require subsidies. What is needed to allow clean, lowest-cost, locally produced energy to support communities and businesses across the UK is a removal of red tape, a return of decision making to local communities and a route to market for appropriately sited projects that work in harmony with the natural world and have local support.

To get the increased clean electricity supply the UK will need in 2030 will require installed capacity of 45GW of offshore wind, 35GW of onshore wind and 45GW of solar.⁶ Today, we have just 11GW of offshore wind, 14GW of onshore wind and less than 14GW of solar,⁷ leaving just eight years to triple our installed capacity.

We therefore urge you to move forwards with the expansion of our renewable energy supply which the UK urgently needs, and to take the following steps:

²https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1040725/BEIS_PAT_Autumn_2021_Energy_Infrastructure_and_Energy_Sources.pdf

³www.renewableuk.com/news/583059/Poll-shows-majority-of-people-in-UK-want-planning-system-reformed-to-enable-more-onshore-wind-farms.htm

⁴www.renewableuk.com/news/583059/Poll-shows-majority-of-people-in-UK-want-planning-system-reformed-to-enable-more-onshore-wind-farms.htm

⁵ <https://twitter.com/DrSimEvans/status/1501556278115676163>

⁶ www.wwf.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-11/WWF_NDC_report.pdf

⁷https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1057646/ET_6.1_DEC_21.xlsx

- Remove the planning blocks on new onshore wind projects in England, and replace them with a proportionate system which prioritises local involvement, protecting and restoring nature, and local benefit, and does not allow lone dissenting voices to veto projects with wide community support.
- Include sufficient capacity each year in Contracts for Difference auctions to end reliance on gas for electricity generation as quickly as possible, and ensure we achieve the required 2030 installed capacity.
- Ensure a route to market for community energy projects, such as a community Contracts for Difference pot and a viable Smart Export Guarantee tariff.
- Ensure Ofgem has a zero-carbon mandate, and the national grid enables power feed in by renewable energy projects across the UK.

Yours,

Possible

The Wildlife Trusts

Power for People

Datblygiadau Egni Gwledig (DEG)

Climate Emergency UK

Uplift

Friends of the Earth

MCS Foundation

Wildlife & Countryside Link

National Federation of Women's
Institutes

Green Alliance

Greenpeace UK

Regen

Mums for Lungs