

Kwasi Kwarteng MP
Minister of State
Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

2 August 2019

Dear Minister,

A Call for a New Onshore Wind Power Generation Strategy

We are writing to you as onshore wind developers, investors and supply chain companies to ask that you establish a new onshore wind strategy to achieve the decarbonisation of power in the UK required to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050 at least cost to consumers and businesses.

The onshore wind industry is Britain's largest generator of renewable electricity, supplying the annual needs of more than 7.25 million homes and supporting thousands of highly skilled, long-term jobs in communities right across Great Britain. As an industry we are fully committed to supporting the UK Government's ambition of delivering net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and the Scottish Government's 2045 ambition. As the Committee on Climate Change's recent progress report made clear, this will require an increased deployment of onshore windⁱ.

The attached report by Vivid Economics analyses the economic benefits of delivering net zero at least cost, which could include some 35GW of onshore wind by 2035, as described in the technical annex of the CCC's *Net Zero* reportⁱⁱ. The data supports the assertion made by Chris Stark, CEO of the Committee on Climate Change to the BEIS Committee that "*the more onshore wind we have the cheaper net zero becomes*"ⁱⁱⁱ.

The analysis shows that not only is onshore wind the lowest-cost source of new energy generation available, further deployment of onshore wind will support 31,000 high-value jobs across the country; and increase investment in the UK supply chain which could then deliver £360 million a year in exports. UK consumers have supported a year on year increase in renewables deployment, and should now reap the benefits of the lowest-cost form of generation. Further deployment of onshore wind could provide a 7% reduction in electricity costs, saving households £50 a year^{iv}.

Thanks in part to a rapid fall in costs, new onshore wind capacity can now be delivered in a post-subsidy environment. However, a lack of supportive Government policies for onshore wind means that there is a real prospect this low-cost, low-carbon power source may not be deployed at the scale required to meet net zero at least cost - 35GW by 2035. Indeed, there is a risk that the disincentives found within the current policy regime could prevent the industry from deploying the 4.5GW of new onshore wind power that could be obtained by repowering retiring onshore wind plant – replacing aged technology from 15-20 years ago with newer, more efficient turbines^v.

In order to deliver onshore wind generation at least-cost to support the path to net zero carbon emissions, whilst maximising the consumer and supply chain benefits for Great Britain, the Government needs an onshore wind strategy today. The Committee on Climate Change recommend that the Government procure new onshore wind through competitive CfD auctions^{vi}, and onshore wind could deliver better value for consumers if planning policy and guidelines were updated to

support modern and efficient turbines with higher tip heights, used as standard internationally, at suitable high-wind locations in Great Britain.

Such a strategy could kick-start deployment in the short term – with some 5GW of consented onshore wind located in Scotland and Wales which could provide least cost power to consumers in support of our zero-carbon ambitions^{vii}.

Beyond the economic and social arguments for onshore wind, there is clear public support for developing new onshore wind as part of a low carbon energy mix, as there is for renewed action to tackle climate change. BEIS's own recent public attitudes tracker shows 79% public support for onshore wind. Moreover, recent polling by the Conservative Environment Network has shown that support for onshore wind amongst Conservative voters runs at 74% whilst over half the electorate look unfavourably on political parties who support a ban^{viii}. In the Scottish Parliament there is cross-party support for appropriately-sited new onshore wind, and the technology will be vital to meeting renewable energy targets and net zero ambition in both Scotland and Wales.

The onshore wind industry wholeheartedly supports the UK Government's commitment to net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Such an ambitious target requires effective and timely policy making to make it achievable and affordable. We therefore urge you to establish a new onshore wind strategy at the soonest opportunity which embraces the creation of new jobs across Great Britain, delivers substantial investment and economic benefits, and lower energy bills for every household.

Yours sincerely,

Hugh McNeal

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Claire Mack

Chief Executive, Scottish Renewables

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Derek Gow

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Simon Wannop

Commercial Director, REG Power Management

Chris Jenkins

Managing Director, Powersystems UK

David Shawcross

Director, Athena PTS

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- ⁱ Committee on Climate Change (2019) *Reducing UK emissions: 2019 Progress Report to Parliament*
 - ⁱⁱ Committee on Climate Change (2019) *Net Zero: Technical Annex*
 - ⁱⁱⁱ BEIS Committee (May 2019) Evidence Session: Clean Growth Strategy and International Climate Change Targets
 - ^{iv} Vivid Economics (2019) *Quantifying the economic benefits of onshore wind to the UK.*
 - ^v Renewable UK (2019) *“Onshore Wind: The UK’s Next Generation”*
 - ^{vi} CCC (2019) *Progress Report to Parliament*
 - ^{vii} BVG Associates (2018) *The Power of Onshore Wind*
 - ^{viii} www.cen.uk.com/polling