



To: Nick Herbert MP
Member for Arundel and South Downs Constituency

20 October 2015

Dear Nick

Concerns over Feed in Tariff

I don't know how closely you've been following the controversy over proposals to reduce FITs for solar and some other renewables. I'm guessing you'll be at the receiving end of quite a lot of protest letters that have come via the Greenpeace and other campaigns - including one from me in my personal capacity.

On behalf of Steyning 10:10, I want to add our collective voice to calls for the Government to reconsider the massive cuts being proposed. Here's our thinking:

- The main argument being put forward by DECC to justify the cuts is that, on current projections, the Levy Control Framework budget that provides subsidies to encourage renewables will be overspent by 20% by 2020/21, because of the faster than expected take-up.
- Their proposal is to take an axe to the subsidy regime to bring the budget back into line. FIT subsidies for household systems will be cut by 87% in January, dropping to zero over the subsequent six years. In the 50-250kW range typical of many school and community energy schemes, the cut is over 70%.
- This seems incredibly short-sighted for a number of reasons. It will:
 - pull the rug out from the UK solar industry just as it is getting going and lead to a lot of job cuts
 - undermine public and business confidence in any future Government energy schemes
 - make it far harder for groups like ours to advocate for green measures in the home
 - snuff out the community energy movement at birth - these projects are only just viable under a reasonably generous FIT regime
 - send exactly the wrong signals on the UK's commitments to tackling

- climate change, just ahead of the Paris summit
- play very badly for voters who have been giving the Conservative Party the benefit of the doubt on green issues - it is certainly hard to square with your reassuring words on the Government's commitment to renewables at the Steyning Elections hustings meeting in April.
 - An alternative approach is to embrace the success of the solar and renewables revolution, and build on the momentum that's been generated. The projected subsidy overspend is a trifling amount in the great scheme of things, not least when put alongside the huge subsidy embodied in the Hinckley C nuclear strike price deal.
 - The notion of a steadily reducing FITs is widely accepted as being a fair and sensible approach - given the falling costs of solar panels. Let this happen gradually, though, rather than overnight, so the subsidy regime nurtures the sustainable development of renewable - as always intended - rather than boom, and now, bust.

We would be grateful if you would pass on our strong views on this to Amber Rudd, in time for the current consultation deadline on October 23rd.

And we would be delighted to talk further on this and wider green issues if you can find a time to meet up with us in Steyning, or Westminster, as per my earlier email.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Many thanks.

Geoff

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