

JAMES HEAPPEY MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Joanna Davey
Transition Wells
2 Glenview
Titlands Lane
Wookey Hole
Wells BA5 1BD

6 November 2015

Dear Ms Davey,

Thank you for your letter of 20th October which you sent on behalf of Transition Wells. As I hope you know, you are represented by an MP who has a real interest in energy, I am serving on the Energy & Climate Change Committee and I have already challenged the Government openly on changes to policy on renewables. I am currently in discussion over their intended changes to policy on fracking beneath AONBs - for obvious reasons, I am vehemently against.

I enclose a copy of an article I wrote for House Magazine at the time of the Conservative Party Conference as well as a report of a fringe event I spoke at hosted by the Policy Exchange. Whilst we must make sure that subsidy is seen as a lever, not a crutch, we must also recognise that supporting the renewable industries is about more than decarbonisation. As you rightly note, it is also part of an industrial strategy and there are many jobs on the South West that have come from these industries.

On solar power in particular, I have been looking at ways that DECC could balance its books whilst protecting as much of the industry as possible. Sadly my original hypothesis that the bulk of the subsidy was going to larger schemes was incorrect - it is the small scale roof top sector that claims the overwhelming majority of the subsidy. I am now working with the solar industry to look at other options and will raise those with Amber Rudd both privately and when she comes to the Select Committee next Tuesday.

I understand from DECC that there is to be a big speech this month in which Amber Rudd will set out her strategy for meeting the nation's energy needs. I am awaiting this speech keenly - there is no doubt that the peak oil energy policies of Miliband, Huhne and Davey are no longer working and so some sort of re-set is necessary. Industries are failing because of high energy costs so we have to find a way of generating more cheaply and more cleanly whilst maintaining security of supply.

Yours sincerely,

Member of Parliament for the Wells Constituency

www.jamesheappey.org.uk