

23rd July 2015

To Secretary of State for Energy & Climate change

Dear Ms Rudd,

Re: subsidies for solar and nuclear

I am writing regarding recent policy announcements regarding subsidies to solar energy and your comments comparing subsidies for solar energy with those for the proposed Hinkley C nuclear power station, which is in my constituency.

During an interview on BBC Radio 4 in which you talked about the proposed cuts to subsidies for solar energy, you acknowledged that subsidies to the nuclear industry would exceed those going to solar, but said nuclear energy provided “a different type of electricity”. You also said that nuclear was needed as solar doesn’t really deliver much electricity during the winter months.

These comments reveal that you have totally failed to understand the renewables sector and its potential, particularly for my constituency in the South West. I recently commissioned a report from the Resilience Centre in Gloucestershire which outlines how the region **can produce more than 100% of its energy needs from renewables alone**, without the need for nuclear or fossil fuels.

This report is available on my website: <http://mollymep.org.uk/2015/04/17/power-to-transform/> I hope you will find some time during the recess of Parliament to learn about the diverse mix of renewable energy resources available in the South West and the huge potential it offers both for quality jobs and long term energy security. We don’t need nuclear to keep the lights on in the winter; there are many other forms of renewable energy that we can use year-round including off-shore wind, tidal lagoon, wave energy and air and ground heat pumps for heating, just to name a few. All that is required is the right investment and the political will to bring about an energy transition. Unfortunately, the government’s thinking on energy appears stuck in the 20th century and seems to be driven by a desire to pander to the fossil fuel and nuclear industries.

It is the misinformed and ideological opposition to renewable technologies that is far more likely to leave us at risk of inadequate energy supply, since we know that nuclear and fracking cannot come on steam as rapidly as wind and solar. It will also destroy the jobs and growth potential offered by the sector. In light of the report I have commissioned I urge you to rethink your energy policies and the distorted subsidy regime you are putting in place.

With best wishes,

Molly Scott Cato

Green MEP for the South West