



Rt.Hon. Darren Jones MP
House of Commons
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9th February 2022

Dear Mr Jones,

BEIS Committee report on Decarbonisation of Heat in Homes

Following the publication of the BEIS committee report on decarbonisation of heating in homes, I am writing to request a meeting to discuss the report in further detail and how we might work together in the future. Firstly, I would like to congratulate you and the BEIS Select Committee on a successful enquiry. The report was a welcome intervention, highlighting the urgent need for stronger heat decarbonisation policy in the UK, however, some REA members have raised concerns about the Committee's stance on off gas grid heat decarbonisation and we would like to discuss this further.

The REA agrees with much of what is written in this report, most notably that the Heat and Buildings Strategy is inadequate, and the Government must put more support into decarbonising British homes; and the report's findings that the Boiler Upgrade Scheme is not of the scale required to meet the Government's targets. We echo the Committee's calls for a heat decarbonisation sector deal, the need to up-skill the heating sector, and increase consumer awareness around decarbonising their home's heating.

However, our members have expressed concern at the reports approach to off-gas grid heat decarbonisation – the statement *"electrification is the only option for off gas grid properties"* (paragraph 68) is not an accurate statement and doesn't account for bioenergy technologies, such as biomass, biopropane and other biofuels.

According to BEIS, biomass has generated nearly 90% of heating capacity under the Renewable Heat Incentive to date. The characteristics of biomass heat make it particularly suited to decarbonising high heat load situations. This includes rural-off-gas grid housing with low energy efficiency values where a high heat load is required. While not a focus of the report, biomass will also have a role in public buildings like schools, hospitals, and care homes and more industrial off-gas grid applications. Biomass heat is also one of a small number of established renewable off-grid heat sectors in the UK, with firm supply chains, expertise, and investors. Biomass heat is already delivering off-grid emission savings today, advancing decarbonisation targets now as further sectors become more established.

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Biopropane, like biomass, provides an alternative where electrification is not possible. It is chemically identical to conventional propane (LPG) so can be blended in any ratio with conventional LPG, allowing a smooth transition to 100% renewable fuels and with no disruption to existing appliances.

The REA agrees with the Committee's assertion that *"there is no 'silver bullet' solution or 'one size fits all' approach to decarbonise domestic heating"* and we believe it is very important to promote a principle of the 'right technology for the right situation' when it comes to decarbonising heat. Whilst we recognise that heat pumps will play a fundamental role in decarbonising off gas grid properties, in many circumstances, other technologies might be the most appropriate solution. The REA raised this in our submissions to your inquiry and we are disappointed to not see this reflected in the Committee's report.

Finally, we are also disappointed that the role of green gases in decarbonising heat in homes on the gas grid was not acknowledged in the report. Biomethane is critical on the path to net zero. In addition, the potential opportunity of net zero hydrogen in heating homes seems to have been missed in the report, there are many extensive safety and feasibility trials that are currently underway to support the use of hydrogen in this sector. The possible role of hydrogen to decarbonise homes on the gas grid, which are hard to electrify, should be recognised.

As stated at the outset, we very much support the majority of the report's findings, especially the need for more ambitious policy support from the Government. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss the role of biomass and green gasses further and how we can support the Select Committee to influence the Government to decarbonise homes quicker.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'N. M. Skorupska', written over a light blue rectangular background.

**Dr Nina Skorupska CBE FEI,
Chief Executive**

CC: daviesr@parliament.uk grovesa@parliament.uk