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BARONESS BLOOMFIELD OF HINTON WALDRIST  
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11 November 2020

Dear Lord Bishop

During the debate on the Infrastructure Planning (Electricity Storage Facilities) Order 2020 on Tuesday 27 October, you asked when will we be able to discuss the Environment Bill. I am sorry that I was unable to respond to you at the time and I promised to write to you.

Scrutiny of the Environment Bill resumed in Public Bill Committee on Tuesday 3 November, following a pause in proceedings due to covid-19. The Bill's Committee Stage will conclude on 1 December and be followed by the remaining Common Stages in due course, before proceeding to the Lords in 2021.

You also asked how the development of micro-generation could be progressed more quickly. Government recognises the important role that microgeneration can play in meeting our net zero target. Government's view is that small-scale low-carbon electricity generation, where it is beneficial to government's objectives and the electricity system, should compete independently of direct subsidy and on its own merits on a level playing field with other electricity generation technologies through competitive, market-based solutions. The Smart Export Guarantee (SEG) provides low-carbon microgenerators, such as homes with solar panels, the right to be paid for the renewable electricity they export to the grid, we are monitoring the types of SEG being offered to assess the development of the small-scale low-carbon export market. Eligible community projects will be able to benefit from the SEG, however we recognise that it may be more suitable for some projects than others. We are continuing to consider what measures we could take to support the efforts of communities that wish to invest in low-carbon community energy.


The Local Energy programme supports Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP), local authorities and communities in England to play a leading role in decarbonisation and clean growth. The programme has funded a range of measures designed to build local capacity and capability. Almost £20m has been invested to date in a range of measures, these include:

- five Local Energy Hubs across England, which provide LEPs and local authorities with access to expertise to help develop and secure investment in low carbon projects; and

- an energy strategy for every LEP area. These strategies describe the local opportunities and challenges for decarbonisation and clean growth, identify a pipeline of low carbon projects, and set out the priorities for the LEP and other stakeholders.

The Rural Community Energy Fund is a £10 million programme that supports rural communities in England to develop renewable energy projects, which provide economic and social benefits to the community. Prospering from the Energy Revolution is a programme funded by the Industrial Strategy Clean Growth Fund and has a wealth of collaborators aiming to trial and test innovative approaches to developing Smart Local Energy Systems.

I hope you find this letter helpful. I will also place a copy in the House library.

Yours sincerely  


**BARONESS BLOOMFIELD OF HINTON WALDRIST**

The Lord Bishop of Salisbury  
House of Lords