



Solar Trade Association
Greencoat House
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Rt Hon Claire Perry MP
Minister of State for Energy & Clean Growth
Department of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy
1 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0ET

30 August 2018

OPEN LETTER: MAINTAINING FAIR PAYMENT FOR EXPORTED ELECTRICITY

Dear Minister

Following the Government's proposal to close the Feed-in-Tariff (FIT) for all new solar installations **we ask you to confirm at the earliest opportunity that a fair payment for surplus electricity exported to the grid will continue to be available to new solar projects by householders, small businesses, farmers, community energy groups & community buildings, such as schools and places of worship.**

This certainty is needed as a matter of urgency to safeguard the confidence of everyday investors in solar and related 'smart' technologies, and of the UK solar industry. The Environmental Audit Committee has recently warned about the 'alarming collapse' in clean energy investment since 2016 & the lack of new enabling policies. Removing the fair export for solar power risks compounding this, with further loss of skills & cost efficiencies in the rooftop solar industry.

Naturally we welcome your Department's commitment to a smart energy system and we share your vision of developing competitive markets into which smart homes, businesses, farmers & communities will be able to offer their services. However, whilst the technology is ready, very complex regulatory issues (for example in relation to export metering, payment levelisation & new market creation) must first be resolved before there is a viable route-to-market for domestic households and a fair reward for their offer.

Substantial work is underway across the industry to overcome the many issues, but the timetables involved mean that there will be a gap, most likely of several years, before their resolution. Meanwhile your FIT consultation proposes removal of the export tariff in just eight months' time.

If the export tariff is removed next April, householders, SMEs, and others investing in solar & smart technologies will encounter very nascent markets that currently lack regulatory foundations. They would therefore potentially have to spill their power onto the grid for free, effectively subsidising the commercial electricity sector. Domestic households, community groups, farmers & small businesses with solar would be the only generators not paid for their exported power.

We hope you agree that this wouldn't be acceptable. Such negative treatment will stifle the market, put off early adopters and give the wrong signals about grid interaction to consumers, thus slowing down UK progress towards a smart and flexible energy system.

Instead, we urge you to ensure pioneering citizens have a positive experience of interaction with the grid so that public trust in a smart energy pathway can be firmly fostered. We would therefore also welcome;

- an interim incentive from next April for metered settlement from smart homes & SMEs with the ability to offer flexibility services, in anticipation of new flexibility markets and modernised regulation to come.

This should ensure local capacity is developed for wider system evolution towards a smarter grid while industry works to resolve the barriers, some of which are costly.

- removal of current policy & practical barriers that could discourage over 800,000 existing solar homes from installing battery storage & smart meters.

The rights of 'prosumers' will shortly be enshrined in new European law, requiring Member States to ensure that self-generators are fairly remunerated for their surplus power. This provides a baseline of fair treatment for consumers so they can invest with confidence and around which market innovation can blossom. If that were to happen across the rest of Europe, but not here, then Britain risks quickly losing its position as market leader in smart power, along with all the associated economic benefits and export opportunities.

We urge you to safeguard the rights of UK prosumers and to confirm the secure continuation of the export tariff as soon as possible. We also urge you to positively support the growth of smart homes, businesses & communities across the UK.

Yours sincerely,



Chris Hewett, Chief Executive, Solar Trade Association, and on behalf of;

Dr Jeremy Leggett, Founding Director, Solarcentury

Howard Johns, Chair, 10:10

Francisco Carranza, Managing Director, Nissan Energy Services

Gavin Stokes, Head of Solar and Storage, E.ON

Dr Doug Parr, Chief Scientist, Greenpeace

Dr Jonathan Scurlock, Chief Advisor, Renewable Energy & Climate Change, National Farmers Union

Craig Bennett, CEO, Friends of the Earth

Peter Taylor, Mayor of Watford

Tony Juniper, Executive Director of Advocacy & Campaigns, WWF-UK

Dr Sam Gardner, Acting Director, WWF Scotland

Tom Burke, Chairman, E3G

James Thornton, CEO, ClientEarth

Ross Grier, Managing Director, NextEnergy Capital

Mary Creagh MP, Chair, Environmental Audit Committee, House of Commons

Lord Teverson, Chair, EU Energy and Environment Sub-Committee, House of Lords

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Cllr Andrew Cooper, Energy Spokesperson, Green Party of England and Wales
Leonie Cooper AM, City Hall Labour Group Energy Spokesperson, Labour Party
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