

**Charles Hendry MP**

**Minister of State**

Department of Energy & Climate Change

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16 August 2010

Andrea Leadsom MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Dear Andrea,

Thank you for the email from your office dated 8 July to Charles Hendry, on behalf of your constituents, about wind farms. He has passed it to me for reply and I apologise for the delay in replying.

Your email raised two specific issues: Renewables Obligations Certificates (ROCs) for wind energy and the ability of local administrations to input into the planning process for wind farms. I will address each of these in turn.

Firstly, your constituents are concerned that Renewables Obligations Certificates (ROCs) provide wind power with an advantage over other technologies. The Renewables Obligation (RO) is the key mechanism for increasing new renewable generating capacity, allowing renewable technologies to compete in the market against more established, economic fuels in order to deliver against our long-term carbon reduction and security of supply goals. The RO has succeeded in kick-starting the sector, particularly in onshore wind and other cheaper technologies, having tripled the proportion of eligible renewable electricity in the UK since its introduction in 2002, from 2.2% at the end of 2002 to 6.6% by the end of 2009. ROCs are only issued to generators for electricity that has been produced from eligible renewable generation.

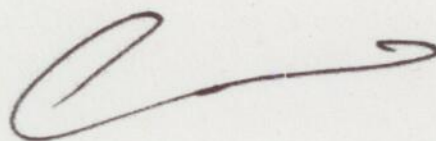
In addition, "banding" of the RO was introduced in 2009. This provides increased support to renewable technologies that are less well-developed or further from the market, such as offshore wind (1.5 ROCs/megawatt hour (MWh)); wave and tidal (2 ROCs/MWh); and dedicated energy crops (2 ROCs/MWh). Advanced gasification and pyrolysis, as well as anaerobic digestion, also now receive 2 ROCs/MWh. Onshore wind, as a more developed technology, will continue to receive 1 ROC/MWh.

Secondly, your constituents are concerned about the planning process for wind farms and the ability of local administrations to have input into the location of developments. In the Coalition Agreement, we stated that we will radically reform the planning system to give neighbourhoods greater ability to shape the places in which their inhabitants live, based on the principles set out in the Conservative Party publication *Open Source Planning*.

This approach will be enshrined within a simple and consolidated national planning framework covering all forms of development which will be published and presented to Parliament. We will make an announcement on how we propose to take forward the national planning framework and the implications for specific areas of planning policy.

I am clear, however, that all renewable energy developments should be in appropriate places and that local concerns should be listened to. Wind farms can be and are refused by consenting bodies on the basis of unacceptable environmental impacts.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop followed by a horizontal line that ends in a small flourish.

**CHRIS HUHNE**