



Rt Hon Jacob Rees-Mogg MP
Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

4th October 2022

Dear Jacob,

Re: Energy Crisis

The UK is in the middle of a very serious energy crisis. Households in communities across Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey are struggling to make ends meet as a direct result of energy policy at a UK level. Your Government's package of support is left wanting.

It was often said that people were facing the stark choice between heating and eating. Now it is fair to say the choice is between freezing and starving. Sadly, some of those in the most desperate of circumstances won't be able to choose and face both this winter.

Household energy bills this winter will be double that of last winter. This is a national emergency and while any support is, of course, to be welcomed, the UK Government isn't going anywhere near far enough to protect the most vulnerable in our communities.

Energy companies and other stakeholders involved have shared their frustration at the lack of information on the practical delivery of your support package leading to confusion among consumers and providers. On top of that, representatives of your Government, including the Prime Minister, seem intent on repeating the misleading statements that energy bills are capped at £2,500 across broadcast media and press. This needs to be urgently corrected and clarified by your department at the earliest given opportunity.

To make matters worse people in the Highlands are already paying a premium for their energy due to higher standing charges. At the same time, we also have some of the highest rates of fuel poverty in any of the nations of the UK. How is that fair?

This brings me to my second point. The Highlands, as a largely rural region, has a high proportion of homes which are not on the gas grid. Recent figures estimate over 60% of homes across the region. Times are tough for everyone, of course, but for those off-grid homes, they are much worse – especially if they live in the Highlands, where they are already asked to pay so much more.

Many months ago, I brought forward a bill in Parliament that, if enacted, would have levelled the playing field for these off-grid consumers. They face a disproportionate rise in their bills compared to everyone else because their means of heating their home is not regulated by Ofgem, resulting in their bills increasing by as much as 250%.

These families are being punished simply because the area they live in is not supported by the national infrastructure. I, along with some of my colleagues, have been raising this issue for years now, but there appears to be no will from your Government to act.

I thought I had misread something when I saw that the support offered to such households was a one-off payment of £100 but, depressingly, it was in fact, all that was on offer.

At a time of national emergency, the population looks to you to act and protect them. They are being failed.

People cannot afford to wait any longer.

There needs to be an urgent rethink of the support on offer, including a substantial increase in the support for families living off-grid, and I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss further the issues my constituents are experiencing.

I look forward to hearing from you.

With regards,

Drew

**MP for Inverness, Nairn,
Badenoch & Strathspey**

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