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Biomass Subsidies:

I appreciate the concerns raised on this issue. It is important that all energy forms we use in our move towards a low-carbon economy are sustainable and it is clear that using whole trees for power generation and transporting biomass products across long distances may not be the most sustainable approach. At the same time, I believe we need to carefully consider the proper constraints and circumstances for when there is a role for biomass in our energy system, such as when used with carbon capture and storage (CCS), provided that CCS technologies are effective in sequestering carbon as intended.

On the proposed continuation of transitional support for large-scale biomass electricity generators after 2027, as you know, the Government published a consultation on this issue in January 2024. It says the aim of this is to support the transition of large-scale biomass generators to bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS). It emphasises the need to ensure these generators remain in the market ahead of any future transition and says the support mechanism “should be designed to manage the changing circumstances” which could affect this transition.

At the same time, I note that the Climate Change Committee (CCC) has recommended ensuring that “large-scale unabated biomass power plants are converted to BECCS as early as feasible and are not given extended contracts to operate unabated at high load factors beyond 2027”. I therefore appreciate the issues you highlight and hope they are given proper consideration in the current consultation process. I can assure you that I will continue to monitor this issue.

More widely, I agree wholeheartedly with the call for greater support for renewable energy such as wind and solar power. It is for this reason that I support plans to deliver a fossil fuel-free electricity system by 2030, including by quadrupling offshore wind, more than tripling solar power and more than doubling our onshore wind capacity, as well as establishing a publicly owned clean energy company to make Britain an energy independent superpower.

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