



18 November 2022

CROSS PARTY LETTER REGARDING A TARGET FOR SOLAR ENERGY, CONSISTENT WITH TARGETS FOR ON AND OFFSHORE WIND.

Dear Mr. Matheson,

As you will be acutely aware, millions of people and businesses are worried about how they will pay their energy bills, which are being kept high by our reliance on fossil fuels.

We all agree that solar energy has a much bigger role to play in reducing running costs for households and businesses and we believe much more can be done to support consumers and businesses to reduce bills and take action on climate change. The first ever debate about solar energy in Scottish Parliament, held in May, reflected the political consensus that solar can deliver for Scotland and deserves a seat at the table. Now it is time to follow political will with concrete action and set a deployment ambition of 4-6GW by 2030.

We have been much heartened by recent commitments by the Scottish Government to remove some of the barriers to more rapid deployment, in particular to bring forward a consultation on Permitted Development Rights for solar on commercial buildings and to include a 'solar vision' in the upcoming revised Energy Strategy.

On this latter initiative, we believe that Scottish Energy Strategy must include a solar energy deployment ambition of 4-6GW by 2030. Solar energy is one of the cheapest, quickest, and easiest to deploy forms of renewable energy, and can directly reduce consumer and business bills. Recent analysis by Solar Energy Scotland has shown that retrofitting a solar energy system on a home could offer an effective annual saving over the lifespan of the system of up to £1,500 or more, depending on the heating system used.

In addition to lowering bills for consumers and businesses, an ambition of 4-6GW in Scotland could support nearly 9,000 Scottish jobs by 2030. This includes a range of roles: solar installers and project developers, site planners, component and other manufacturing technicians, software and system designers, construction and trade roles, and communications and finance specialists. These jobs will be created by a healthy Scottish solar industry, putting money in pockets, and supporting Scottish business.

The Scottish Government can help deliver this by showing leadership and providing certainty for planning authorities, regulators, and industry on the level of solar deployment it supports. Scottish Government deployment ambitions have previously supported industry and investor confidence in onshore and offshore wind. And to emphasise the point, the recent Scottish Government Hydrogen Statement makes clear that it is intended as a "clear signal of intent, founded on evidence of demand, [that] will allow industry and investors to respond with confidence."

Solar energy, too, deserves an ambition, so that the industry and investors can respond with confidence.



The Scottish solar industry is ready to help deliver a just energy transition, but key policy barriers remain. These must be removed to meet Scotland's climate targets and alleviate fuel poverty. First among these is the lack of overall ambition for solar deployment in Scotland. Setting such ambition and sending this signal is hugely important and we urge you collectively from across the political spectrum to include this proposal in the draft consultation when it is produced.

Kind regards,

Fergus Ewing MSP

Paul McLennan MSP

Brian Whittle MSP

Colin Smyth MSP

Mark Ruskell MSP

Liam McArthur MSP

Willie Rennie MSP

Thomas McMillan, Chair Solar Energy Scotland