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THE PRIME MINISTER

28 January 2020

Dear Mr & Julie,

Thank you for your letter of 18 December. Climate change knows no national boundaries, but I agree that the United Kingdom can lead the way, with punctilious and radical action.

In the Conservative manifesto, we clearly set out our vision to ensure Britain has the world's most ambitious environmental programme. The Queen's Speech reaffirmed our commitment to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The United Kingdom has led the world in its response to climate change, cutting emissions by 42 per cent while growing the economy by 73 per cent since 1990. I look forward to working closely with the Committee on Climate Change as we grasp the opportunity to continue this leadership by hosting CoP26 this year.

However, the progress we have made is not a cause for complacency; rather, it is a demonstration of what can and must be achieved. 2020 is a crucial year for action on climate change. The Government has been elected with an unambiguous commitment to net zero, which we will deliver. As your letter rightly points out, this requires action across the economy. This year, we will be bringing forward plans to ensure our actions meet the scale of the challenge, building on our ambitious proposals and making firm commitments on all the areas you highlight as priorities – from buildings to power generation, and from transport to land use.

Adapting to the impacts of climate change will be at the heart of our efforts, as we ensure every sector of the economy is resilient to current and future climate change risks. The Government's Environment Bill will provide legally binding targets and a transformative strategy to improve air quality, restore and enhance nature, transform waste management and protect precious water resources. Through our second National Adaptation Programme, we are also taking action to factor climate risks across government policies and plans, in order to bolster national resilience to flooding, overheating, water scarcity, impacts on the natural environment and other risk areas.

Delivering this ambition will require action from the entire United Kingdom: from Government, business, universities and research institutions, and the British people themselves. We all hold a collective responsibility. I will be establishing a new Cabinet Committee on Climate Change to drive forward our work, unifying and driving forward the response of all Government departments.

I look forward to working closely with you as we develop and implement our plans, and I am grateful for your advice and scrutiny in both the setting and delivery of our ambitious targets. As Margaret Thatcher said in 1989, we are the trustees of our planet, and the United Kingdom is ready to demonstrate global leadership and take a stand to halt this impending crisis.

Thank you, once again, for writing.

Ben Woods

Yours ever

Boris