

Mr Rob Gibson MSP

Convener

Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee

The Scottish Parliament

EDINBURGH

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During the Committee evidence session on climate change on 11 November, Sarah Boyack raised a question about the potential cancellations of community energy projects and asked what consideration had been given to reallocate underspend in budgets to support communities in the short term. Dr McLeod has asked me to respond direct to the Committee as the issue falls within my portfolio.

As Dr McLeod advised the Committee on the day, I have been in regular contact with Amber Rudd, UK Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change following her various announcements made over the last few months on subsidies cuts for renewables

In particular, I highlighted that community energy is a key priority for the Scottish Government and that it was hugely disappointing that there wasn't anything definitive for community projects included in the Feed in Tariff Review which is the main support mechanism for community groups. I also raised concern that the community groups we are supporting under our Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES) now face an uncertain future. I want to assure the Committee that our CARES contractor, Local Energy Scotland, is providing all the necessary support to community groups to ensure they can continue to develop their projects during this period of uncertainty.

I will continue to put pressure on the UK Government to ensure that community energy is viewed favourably going forward and that the momentum we have built up over the last 10 years is not lost.

I hope this is helpful.

Fergus Ewing