



Via Gloucestershire Climate Action Network (www.GlosCAN.org)
Correspondence address: Vaughan Webber, Secretary, info@gloscan.org

The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London
SW1P 3JR

5 February 2018

Dear Mr Gove,

'Green Brexit': A role for climate change mitigation activities to 'earn' farm support

We are writing as parliamentarians, from across the political spectrum, who are all signed-up Supporters of Gloucestershire Climate Action Network's Starting Points and Aims.

Our concern is quite simple. It is that in the discussions and negotiations over what should replace the current farm support arrangements under the Common Agricultural Policy, climate change mitigation activities should not be forgotten or marginalised as valid ways in which farmers can 'earn' support payments. Such activities could include:

- Quantifiable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions,
- Quantifiable enhanced sequestration of carbon in soils, and/or
- Participation in trials of innovative farming and land management practices that could reduce net emissions.

We note that these were all alluded to (directly or indirectly) in your 4 January speech at the 2018 Oxford Farming Conference. However, it is not clear to us that you see mitigation of climate change as a key 'public good' in its own right, global in scale and therefore distinct from 'environmental enhancement' within the UK. Also, a stable climate system with safe levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere should be thought of as 'natural capital'. Another distinctive attribute of climate change is that delay in starting mitigation actions reduces their long-term effectiveness.

We hope in future to see more linkage of agricultural policy to the aims of the Climate Change Act, whether via the Government's 'Clean Growth Grand Challenge' in the 2017 Industrial Strategy White Paper or otherwise. In view of the overlap of interests with energy and climate change policy, we are copying this letter to other relevant Ministers.

Yours sincerely,

David Drew, MP for Stroud (Labour, Shadow Farming, Food and Rural Minister)

Julie Girling, MEP for South-West England (Independent Conservative, Member of European Parliament Committee on Environment, Public Health & Food Safety)

Clare Moody, MEP for South-West England (Labour)

Molly Scott Cato, MEP for South-West England (Green, Member of European Parliament Committee on Agriculture & Rural Development)