

Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
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27 December 2023

Dear Prime Minister

I wrote to you on 22 September to express my concern about attempts to undermine and politicise the role of the Climate Change Committee following your disappointing speech on net zero. Although I have yet to receive a reply, I am writing again to you now to urge you to end the excessive delay in the extremely important appointment of the new Chair of the Committee.

In my letter, I stressed that it is most important that whoever is appointed provides excellent leadership and ensures that the Committee continues to offer clear and independent advice.

While I understand that the search for the right candidate takes time, the current delay is creating further damaging uncertainty about UK climate policy following your decision to weaken key targets for the transition away from gas central heating and internal combustion engines in vehicles.

As you know, the Committee is a statutory body composed of independent experts who advise Parliament and the Government on compliance with the Climate Change Act. The Committee performs a number of vital functions, including independent expert scrutiny of Government policies to achieve net zero annual emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050, as required by the Act. The current members are recognised across the world as international experts drawn from business and academia.

The Committee is regarded around the world as a model for expert advisory bodies on climate change. Its creation in 2008 was a demonstration of global leadership by the UK, and its work continues to be recognised as world-leading, thanks in no small part to the leadership of Lord Deben, and his predecessor Lord Turner of Ecchinswell.

On 22 July 2022, the Committee announced that Lord Deben would continue in his post as Chair for an additional nine months beyond the end of his scheduled term in order to ensure a smooth transition for the new Chair. Given that the recruitment of the new Chair began 18 months ago, it is inexplicable that the appointment has still not been announced, and that the Committee has required an Interim Chair, Professor Piers Forster, for the past six months since Lord Deben stepped down at the end of June 2023.

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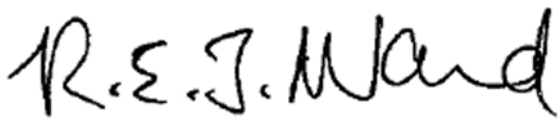
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Chair:
**Professor Lord Stern
of Brentford**

The Committee's work is at a critical stage. It has already started preparing its advice to the Government on the statutory Seventh Carbon Budget for the period 2038 to 2042. The quality and integrity of this advice must be of the highest order, and must be built on robust and rigorous analysis. The Budget is due to be agreed by Parliament in the first half of 2025, and it will be a crucial milestone on the UK's pathway to net zero emissions by 2050, providing a clear direction for decision-makers across the UK in the public, private and third sectors. While Professor Forster is no doubt performing admirably as Interim Chair, and the Committee has excellent staff led by its Chief Executive, Chris Stark, it is not helpful that the Committee does not yet have a new Chair in post as it carries out this vital work.

I urge you to end this potentially damaging hiatus and appoint a strong and independent new Chair of the Climate Change Committee without further delay.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R.E.J. Ward". The letters are cursive and connected, with a prominent flourish at the end of the word "Ward".

Bob Ward
Policy and Communications Director
Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment