



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

Department for Business, Energy &
Industrial Strategy
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

Jonathan
Barns Farm Junior School
Henniker Gate
Chelmsford
CM2 6QH

T +44 (0) 20 7215 5000
E enquiries@beis.gov.uk
W www.gov.uk

Our ref: TOSL2019/12593

8 July 2019

Dear Jonathan,

Thank you so much for your letter of 3 June addressed to Her Majesty the Queen, about climate change. As this matter falls within our department's portfolio, I have been asked to respond.

I was very interested to read your letter about climate change and protecting our polar bears and am pleased that you feel this is such an important matter. I wholeheartedly agree.

Climate change is one of the most urgent and pressing challenges that we face today and we are committed to tackling it. The Climate Change Act 2008 was the first of its kind in the world and set a legally binding 2050 target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% compared with 1990 levels. We are already making strong progress towards that target.

Animals' habitats, like the polar bears you mention, are under threat due to global warming. We are committed to ensuring that these habitats are protected by using our world class science to allow us to understand the challenges facing the Arctic and finding solutions to these challenges, protecting the already fragile environment and supporting responsible and sustainable development of the region.

The Government is doing all it can to stop plastics from getting into our oceans and harming the animals and plants that live there. We were the first country in the world to decide to ban microbeads, which are tiny little plastic beads found in some cosmetics and personal care products. This will help stop billions of these tiny pieces of plastic from entering our oceans and being eaten by marine animals. The ban on making these beads came into force on 9 January 2018 and the ban on selling items containing microbeads came into force in the UK in June 2018.

We have also reduced the number of plastic bags reaching our oceans by introducing a 5p charge for plastic carrier bags from supermarkets and large retail stores. This is to encourage everyone to reuse and recycle their plastic bags, which I'm sure you already do. We are also looking at introducing a Deposit and Reward and Return Scheme for plastic bottles to encourage people to recycle more, stop littering and protect the environment.

After we leave the European Union, the UK will continue to lead the world on tackling global challenges like climate change through our ambitious domestic action and our international climate finance commitments. We will continue to strengthen our relationship with global groups to work together to tackle climate change. We are fortunate in the UK to have world leading organisations at promoting climate action and we continue to work with them closely on this critical agenda.

Having a balanced energy policy, comprising a mix of fossil fuels, such as oil and gas, and clean energy, as well as being more energy efficient, will help us to heat our homes and keep the lights on. Oil currently meets around a third of primary energy demand and is the main energy source for transport. Gas still makes up around a third of our current energy usage and over 85% of homes use gas for heating and cooking.

The Government cannot beat climate change on its own – we need support and action from all parts of society, so I want to thank for caring so deeply about such an important issue. You may be interested in reading through this guide on some simple steps that we can all take, such as switching to a smart meter at home and walking or cycling for shorter journeys: www.gov.uk/government/news/green-great-britain-week-simple-steps-you-can-take-to-reduce-emissions. I would, of course, encourage you to share it with your friends and family, too.

Thank you once again for taking the time to write Jonathan. I hope you find this information useful. It is really encouraging that young people are thinking hard about climate change, the future of our planet and the actions that UK Government is taking to tackle it. I know you will continue to help as much as you can for the many years to come.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Loren Payne', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Loren Payne
BEIS MINISTERIAL CORRESPONDENCE UNIT