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Thank you for your letter dated 24 March, enclosing briefing on the unfortunate events in Fukushima.

As you know, the Secretary of State has asked UK Chief Nuclear Inspector, Dr Mike Weightman, to provide a report to the Government on the implications of the unprecedented events in Japan and the lessons to be learned for the UK's existing nuclear facilities; as well as any potential new build programme. He has asked for an interim report by mid-May 2011 and a final report within six months. The reports will be put in the public domain. In the meantime, we are continuing to take action to remove barriers to investment in new nuclear.

The Prime Minister has made clear that he thinks that nuclear power should be part of the energy mix in the future as it is part of the mix right now. The Government remains clear that nuclear power, without public subsidy specific to the nuclear industry, has a role to play in our energy mix, alongside a massive expansion in other low carbon technologies; including renewable and Carbon Capture and Storage.

I understand that DECC officials from the Office of Nuclear Development are already meeting with colleagues at the Nuclear Industry Association in order to discuss messaging and communications regarding the events at Fukushima, and their potential impact on the UK nuclear programme.

If it would be helpful to meet to discuss these issues further, please do let me know.

Yours sincerely, Charles

CHARLES HENDRY