



Department
of Energy &
Climate Change

Department of Energy & Climate Change
3 Whitehall Place,
London SW1A 2AW
www.decc.gov.uk

Our ref: FOI 13/0795

25 July 2013

Dear

RE: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

Thank you for your freedom of information request of 22 June 2013 in which you asked the following:

"On 18 June, Ed Davey made a speech at Residence Palace, Brussels, which is published on the DECC website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/edward-davey-speech-ambitious-and-flexible-europes-2030-framework-for-emissions-reduction>

Davey: "The science is solid and accepted by pretty much every government on earth. Of course there will always be those with a vested interest in the status quo. Who seek to create doubt where there is certainty. And you will always get crackpots and conspiracy theorists who will deny they have a nose on their face if it suits them. But the truth is this: while forecasts of the future rate at which the world will warm differ, and while many accept we will see periods when warming temporarily plateaus, all the scientific evidence is in one direction."<<

Davey's comments -- now published by DECC -- seem to refer to arguments made by individuals or organisations in the wider debate about climate and energy policy. However, these parties were not named. Moreover, nor were any specific claims made by these parties addressed by Davey given any substance.

I am sure that the comments made by Davey in his speech reflect the best scientific advice and research, and an impartial view of the arguments for and against the policies he is advancing.

However, in the interests of clarity and an informed debate, I believe the Secretary of State should be more candid about who he is addressing his arguments to, and what the substance of their arguments is. I would like the following questions to be treated as a FOI request.

- 1 *Who are the parties with 'vested interests' referred to by Davey?*
- 2 *By what means was Davey made aware of these 'vested interests'?*
- 3 *Who are the 'crackpots and conspiracy theorists' referred to by Davey?*
- 4 *By what means was Davey made aware of these 'crackpots and conspiracy theorists'?*
- 5 *What is the science, referred to by Davey, which is contradicted by the 'vested interests' and 'crackpots and conspiracy theorists'?*
- 6 *How do the arguments advanced by 'crackpots and conspiracy theorists' and 'vested interests' contradict the science?*
- 7 *What is Davey's (or the department's) evidence that 'vested interests' and 'crackpots and conspiracy theorists' have had an impact on the wider debate?*
- 8 *Has the department had an internal discussion, or commissioned any research -- internally or externally -- that identifies these 'crackpots and conspiracy theorists' and 'vested interests', and evaluates their arguments? If such discussions or research exist, may I see them?"*

Your request has been considered under the terms of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000. However, some of the information which you have requested constitutes environmental information for the purposes of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs). As such, to the extent that the information requested is environmental your request has also been considered under the EIRs.

Your request is in relation to the following two sentences of a speech made by Secretary of State Edward Davey on 18th June 2013:

Of course there will always be those with a vested interest in the status quo.

And:

And you will always get crackpots and conspiracy theorists who will deny they have a nose on their face if it suits them.

In answer to your questions 1-5, we do not hold recorded information within scope of these questions. As is made clear in the statement Edward Davey's intent was not to point to any particular group or party, but to the practice of public relations and lobbying in all areas of public governance, some arguing for change, some arguing for no change, and how it can sometimes be reflected unchallenged in some sections of the media. His comments were informed by his personal experience, including as a member of Parliament.

The scientific evidence that Edward Davey referred to in his speech comes from the published peer-reviewed work of many research groups in the UK and around the world and from the published assessments undertaken by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and other organisations, including the Royal Society, the US National Academies of Science and the Committee on Climate Change.

In answer to your questions 6 and 7, Edward Davey did not make the specific claims to which you refer in his speech, and we do not hold recorded information within scope of these questions.

DECC has not commissioned any research internal or external for the purpose you suggest. However the Department holds some information in scope of your question 8. It regularly monitors arguments and debates on climate change and the general results are often discussed internally via email or meetings. The Department also regularly publishes scientific advice and documents and commentary on its policies and is transparent in the advice it receives. The scientific advice and documents are freely available from the DECC website at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-energy-climate-change>

After careful examination of question 8 we have determined that Regulation 12(4)(b) applies to that part of the question that concerns DECC's internal emails, briefing papers or meeting notes where climate change issues are discussed. Regulation 12(4)(b) provides that a public authority may refuse to disclose information to the extent that the request for information is manifestly unreasonable. In applying the exception, we have considered the public interest test in respect of your request and applied a presumption in favour of disclosure (as required by Regulation 12(2) of the EIRs). We acknowledge that greater transparency makes the Government more accountable to the electorate, increases trust and also enables the public contribution to policy making to become more effective. Gathering the information you requested would require a search of the Department's electronic and paper records, personal email accounts and devices of staff concerned. Determining, locating, retrieving and extracting the requested information would take longer than 24 working hours. This would involve a significant cost to the Department and diversion of resources from the teams concerned and the Department's other work. Given that a lot of the information the Department holds is already in the public domain we consider that the public interest there may be in disclosing documents through this request, and any associated benefits in increasing transparency, are outweighed by the cost of meeting the request.

Appeals procedure

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and

should be addressed to the Information Rights Unit (foi@decc.gov.uk) or by post to

Information Rights Unit (DECC Shared Services),
Department for Business, Innovation & Skills,
Victoria 3, 5th Floor, 1 Victoria Street, London, SW1H 0ET.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely,