

Rt Hon Rachel Maclean MP  
Minister for Housing  
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities  
2 Marsham St  
London  
SW1P 4DF

CC: Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP

17<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Dear Minister,

**Re: Confirmation of no gas grid connections for new homes under the Future Homes Standard**

We are writing as a coalition of architects, housing organisations, energy companies, financial institutions, installers, manufacturers, aviation firms and civil society to seek confirmation that there will be no new gas grid connections permitted under the Future Homes Standard, in line with the UK's energy security and climate goals. This is a key policy decision to ensure that new homes are fit for the future, alongside high fabric performance, to position the UK as a leader in clean heat.

*A clear, long-term signal helps spur investment in British clean tech supply chains, skills and training*

The Future Homes Standard will set out requirements for newly built homes to ensure a high energy performance, with electric technologies such as heat pumps anticipated to be the primary heating source, as well as low carbon heat networks. Heat pumps are an established technology, with approximately 59 million<sup>1</sup> installed across Europe and over 190 million worldwide. Heat pumps support energy security as they are 3-4 times more efficient than gas boilers, and significantly reduce household fossil gas usage. The UK has a target to install 600,000 heat pumps per year by 2028. However, we continue to lag far behind the rest of Europe on installation rates, having only installed 40,000 in 2022. The new build market will be key for decarbonising heat and getting on track for energy security and climate targets. Clear policy signals through the Future Homes Standard are vital to spur private investment, boosting British manufacturing and skills by providing the clean heat market confidence to grow supply chains.

*Ensuring no fossil fuel loopholes*

It is critically important that the Future Homes Standard does not allow new homes to be connected to the gas grid, and we seek confirmation from the government that this will be the case. There is a risk that allowing 'hydrogen-ready' boilers to be installed under the Future Homes Standard could create a loophole which would allow new homes to be connected to the gas grid and burn fossil fuels for years to come. 100% hydrogen for heating is not yet a tried and tested technology, and unlikely to be available for decades – and even then, unlikely to be economic as a nationwide solution for domestic heat decarbonisation. While hydrogen will be essential for decarbonising sectors including power and aviation, the House of Commons Science and Technology Select Committee has concluded hydrogen will have a limited role in replacing gas in heating homes.<sup>2</sup> Allowing hydrogen-ready boilers and new connections to the gas grid could lock new home owners

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<sup>1</sup> Heating and Ventilation News, 20 February 2023, **European heat pump sales near 3 million units in 2022**

<sup>2</sup> UK Parliament, 19 December 2022, **Hydrogen is not a Panacea for reaching Net Zero, warn MPs**

into polluting fossil fuels, and put them at risk of costly retrofits in the likely case that the domestic gas grid is never fully converted to green hydrogen.

We therefore strongly encourage you to signal that the government will rule out new gas grid connections under the Future Homes Standard, ensuring no loopholes which could leave homeowners locked into fossil fuels at a time when the UK is seeking to reach net zero and energy security. We would be pleased to meet with you to discuss the matter further. Please contact [Juliet.Phillips@e3g.org](mailto:Juliet.Phillips@e3g.org) to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely,

E3G

Nationwide Building Society

Abundance Investment

Coventry Building Society

E.ON

Octopus

Sustainable Aviation

Good Energy

Principality Building Society

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors

Energy UK

Ecology Building Society

UK Green Building Council

Airlines UK

ADS Group

Ground Source Heat Pump Association

Kensa Group

Ambue

Nesta

ECD Architects

Thermal Storage UK

End Fuel Poverty Coalition

Friends of the Earth

Power for People

ep group

Green Alliance

Uplift

Global Witness

Heat Pump Federation

Regen

Greenpeace UK

WWF UK

ICAX

MCS Charitable Foundation

Positive Money

Environmental Justice Foundation

Chartered Institute of Housing

Architects Climate Action Network

NATIVE STUDIO

Transition by Design

Parents for Future UK