From Dan Rogerson
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Water, Forestry, Rural Affairs and Resource Management

Dear Julian

ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE: ENSURING PROGRESS IN KEY SECTORS

I am writing to introduce myself as the minister now responsible for climate change adaptation. As such I am keen to learn how, through the second round of voluntary adaptation reporting, providers of services critical for the running of this country and the health of our natural environment are preparing to respond to a changing climate.

This July, under the Climate Change Act 2008, my department laid before Parliament a report called ‘2013 Strategy for exercising the Adaptation Reporting Power and list of priority reporting authorities’. This sets out how government will use the Adaptation Reporting Power over the next few years. The Strategy identified a number of organisations which would be invited to submit a voluntary report for the first time. Use of a statutory direction was ruled out to ensure that reporting is flexible and responsive to the needs and circumstances of the different sectors, while minimising burdens.

Reports submitted will help government understand the level of capacity to adapt in the sector. The information provided will also importantly inform the next Climate Change Risk Assessment which will be published in 2017 and the update of the National Adaptation Programme thereafter.

To help organisations complete their reports we have updated guidance for new reporting authorities, which is attached to this letter. This was shared with new reporting authorities in draft and has benefited from incorporating views received. In line with our overall approach, use of the guidance is completely voluntary and can be used flexibly, as much as is needed or appropriate.
We are committed to putting as much information as possible into the public domain, and we would wish to publish your full report in due course. I do, however, appreciate that some information in your report may be sensitive for commercial or security reasons. Such information can be withheld in accordance with the exceptions in the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and related regulations, including the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, or for which disclosure is prohibited by another enactment. I would therefore ask you to mark any information that you think should not be published, and submit a second, redacted version alongside the complete report. We will confirm that your redacted report complies with these regulations within 3 months of being submitted.

Based on the feedback received from our consultation process, the Environment Agency’s Climate Ready Support Service will be providing help to reporting organisations. They are hosting an initial workshop on Tuesday 14th January in London, to which your organisation has already been invited. If you have not already, please book your place via http://bookwhen.com/climateready

As recent weather events demonstrate, anticipating and building resilience to the impacts of a changing climate and the associated weather extremes is crucial to safeguard growth and protect communities and businesses. I therefore invite you to submit a voluntary adaptation report to describe your organisation’s approach to increasing resilience to a changing climate.

I would be grateful if you could acknowledge receipt of this letter with confirmation that your organisation will participate in this reporting round, to acc_reportingpower@defra.gsi.gov.uk. It would also be greatly appreciated if you could inform us as to when you plan to report.

I very much hope you will participate in this voluntary process and I look forward to learning how you assess climate risks and what actions you are taking, or plan to take, to increase your resilience.

Yours sincerely

DAN ROGERSON MP