
Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Sir David Norgrove

Rebecca Long-Bailey MP
House of Commons
(by email)

3 July 2019

Dear Ms Long-Bailey,

We have been contacted about the use of statistics on solar installations in the Labour Party's response to the government's Smart Export Guarantee¹, and in particular the statement that "the Conservatives have effectively collapsed the solar industry, with a 94% drop in installations". This figure was also used by the Leader of the Opposition.²

The 94% figure is misleading. It refers to the change in new solar capacity between March 2019 and April 2019. For the last several years, new solar capacity has increased steeply in March and dropped sharply in April. Changes to quarterly payment levels or policies changing or ending at the end of the financial year may be driving this March-April pattern. It would be more accurate to say that solar installations have levelled off since 2017.

It is also regrettable that neither statement mentioned which two time periods were being compared, and no source was given in the Labour Party response to the Government's Smart Export Guarantee. To allow the public to scrutinise the use of statistics, it would be helpful to include such information.

Yours sincerely



Sir David Norgrove

¹ <https://labour.org.uk/press/rebecca-long-bailey-responds-governments-smart-export-guarantee/>

² <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2019-06-12/debates/294696EF-04CF-461D-B46B-DCECD6E3779B/EmploymentWestMidlands#contribution-20616182-09B3-4138-A041-AFBB949E37D0>