

The Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP
President of COP26

16 September 2021

Dear President of COP26,

We, the undersigned organisations, are writing to you on behalf of the anaerobic digestion (AD) industry in this pivotal moment for the UK - as host of the next UN Climate Summit COP26. As President of COP26, your role is to drive international climate ambition and to represent the UK's own track record on climate action. With this letter, we ask you to become an advocate for the UK AD industry as a strategic sector in achieving net zero.

The UK is currently missing a huge opportunity to build on an existing UK success story by turning all its organic 'wastes' into 'bioresources', which would:

- help the UK achieve **carbon neutrality**, including delivering one third of the 5th Carbon Budget shortfall;
- **build back greener** by creating **60,000 green jobs this decade**;
- help **level up** the country, as these jobs will be spread throughout the UK including in rural areas;
- bring over **£5bn of private sector investment**;
- support the UK's **agricultural sector** and **food and drinks industry**;
- **boost the UK's exports** to a \$1trn global industry growing exponentially (CAGR already over 5.5%);
- **set an example to the rest of the world** – the UNFCCC says AD is a 'win-win-win-win-win' technology.

All organic wastes *must* be managed. If they are not, they release the potent greenhouse gas methane directly into the atmosphere and cause human health issues. When recycled through AD, these emissions are captured and the organic 'wastes' turned into valuable 'bioresources': a storable, flexible green gas (biogas), bio-CO₂, a rich-in-nutrient bio-fertiliser (digestate) and other sustainable fertilisers that are direct analogues, both capable of replacing conventional carbon-intensive products and helping restore soil health, and other valuable bio-products.

Yet, there are over 140 million tonnes of readily available organic wastes still being left undigested in the UK every year.

Net Zero is not possible without biogas, which is essential for the hardest to decarbonise sectors of waste management, agriculture, heat, and transport. The Food and Drink sector has also identified AD as critical for its decarbonisation pathway. Biomethane is the only *ready to use* technology capable of immediately greening gas grid and decarbonising HGVs, currently responsibly for 23% and 5% of total annual emissions respectively. Moreover, by utilising the UK's existing gas infrastructure, biomethane is a cost-effective option. It does not require the installation of new pipelines, the installation of grid storage, nor the replacement of household boilers and cookers. The UK cannot wait 10-20 years until hydrogen and electrical solutions come online. Moreover, biomethane and hydrogen are highly complementary – each gas can be converted to the other – and together, they can deliver a net zero gas sector. In fact, converting biomethane to green hydrogen can be *net negative*, actively reversing GHG emissions. The industry has recently launched the [UK AD and Biogas Industry Climate Declaration](#) whereby the AD sector commits to do everything in its powers to help the UK meet its climate

THE ENERGY BEHIND THE AD REVOLUTION

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goals by achieving its full potential of reducing the UK's total greenhouse gas emissions by 6% by 2030. This would deliver 30% of the shortfall needed to meet the 5th carbon budget for 2030.

As well as saving tonnes of CO₂, AD can help the UK build back greener being a source of significant job creation. At full capacity, the industry could be employing over 60,000 people directly and indirectly. Crucially, as the locations of AD plants match the sources of organic wastes and crop feedstocks in rotation, these new green jobs will be evenly distributed across the UK, providing often-neglected rural communities with new opportunities for employment and vocational training, and in this way helping the levelling up of the country.

With the right support, the UK AD sector would become highly competitive globally. With over 105bn tonnes of organic wastes generated by humans worldwide every year, the global AD market potential is estimated at in excess of £1trn. Recycling these wastes through AD would reduce global emissions by at least 10% and create 11-15 million jobs.

In its *Progress Report to Parliament 2021*, the Climate Change Committee (CCC) warns the Government that the gap between current climate policies and targets remains wide. We as a country are out of time. Meeting our 2030 goals will be critical if we are to reach climate neutrality by 2050. We urgently need to invest in ready-to-use technologies such as AD. However, current policies do not and will not enable the sector to capture all available organic wastes to deliver its full decarbonisation and job creation potential and other associated benefits.

ADBA has raised with all relevant government departments that the industry needs a policy framework that brings together the multiple strands of work ongoing across government into a cohesive support strategy. The terms of the strategy have already been developed by all key stakeholders with the support of the DIT and reflect feedback from BEIS, Defra and DfT. These include:

- Support AD in agriculture, through the introduction of a tariff premium for the treatment of manures and slurries through AD and promote the spreading of digestate as a replacement for carbon-intensive mineral fertilisers
- Support the use of biomethane in transport, through its recognition as a leading low-carbon fuel to decarbonise HGV operations, and better incentives to promote investment in the development of new biomethane plants for transport and refuelling infrastructure
- Support small businesses and community projects in developing a circular economy, using AD to transform local waste into local heat and power
- Establish material hierarchies for all organic wastes with AD as the optimal recycling technology
- Target innovation funding to support key aspects of the industry that would deliver a step change in performance, reducing or eliminating the need for financial support for the sector and improving its international competitiveness

There are private sector investors with in excess of £5bn ready to invest in the UK AD industry, if this strategy were to be agreed. However, without political backing, this will not happen. By this letter, we are therefore asking for your support in advocating for the unlocking of the potential of our industry and would welcome a meeting with you to discuss in greater detail how this can be achieved.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

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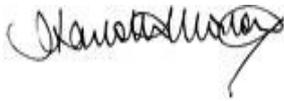
Signatories (in alphabetical order)

Anaerobic Digestion and Bioresources Association (ADBA)	Grissan
Biogen	Institution of Gas Engineers & Managers (IGEM)
CCm Technologies	National Farmers Union (NFU)
CNG Fuels	Northumbrian Water
Country Land and Business Association (CLA)	Privilege Finance
Energy Networks Association (ENA)	Scotch Whisky Association (SWA)
Evonik Industries	Severn Trent
Food and Drink Federation (FDF)	SGN
Gas Vehicle Network (GVN)	United Utilities
GFD	

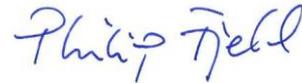
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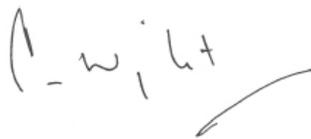
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