



08 June 2009

Rt Hon Harriet Harman QC MP  
Leader of the House of Commons  
26 Whitehall  
London SW1A 2WH

Dear Ms Harman,

### **Parliamentary scrutiny of science and engineering**

Following the Prime Minister's announcement that DIUS and BERR will be merged to form the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, I am writing to you regarding the parliamentary scrutiny of science and engineering policy.

Prior to the creation of DIUS, the House of Commons had a Science and Technology Committee that had an extremely important role in scrutinising science policy across government. The IUSS Committee has done an admirable job of trying to scrutinise science policy and added science to its title to reflect its importance. However, it has been unable to be as effective as the former Science and Technology Committee in scrutinising science policy across government due to its departmental remit. Expanding the IUSS Committee's remit to include business issues as well will mean that there is even less scope to cover the wide variety of science and engineering issues facing society and policymakers.

The cross-departmental nature of science policy is reflected within government in the Government Office for Science and the Cabinet committee on Science and Innovation. The House of Commons should have an analogous set-up that allows for cross-departmental scrutiny. The former Science and Technology Committee was able to look at issues that cut across the boundaries of individual government departments, and was extremely important in promoting informed debate on science and technology issues and scrutinising science policy and funding.

There has been much discussion recently about ways to empower Parliament in scrutinising government policy. CaSE strongly urges you to take a positive step in this direction by supporting the creation of a Science and Engineering Committee in the House of Commons.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Dusic  
**Director**  
nick@sciencecampaign.org.uk

Cc: Phil Willis MP, Chair of the IUSS Committee