Dear Jesse

Volkswagen emissions scandal and related issues

I am writing for an update on progress since your last letters, dated 11 December 2017 and 19 July 2018, on the VW emissions scandal and related issues, including: the recall process and problems with technical measures applied to recalled vehicles; the question of possible legal action in the UK by the Government and the Department’s support for class actions on behalf of UK consumers; and further information on recent organisational and legislative changes to strengthen monitoring and enforcement in this area.

In particular:

1. In your letter dated 11 December 2017, you reported that approximately 819,000 of the 1.2 million affected vehicles had been recalled and updated in accordance with the approved technical measures. How many affected vehicles have now been recalled and updated, and when do you expect the process to be completed?

2. Your July 2018 letter expressed “extreme concern” that the German investigation had discovered earlier in 2018 further VW Group vehicles, I believe Audi models, had been fitted with defeat devices and disappointment at VW’s apparent unwillingness to include such vehicles its “Trust Building Measure”. Which further models have been discovered to have been fitted with defeat devices? How many of these vehicles are UK-owned? How many have been recalled? How many have been updated? What further representations have you made to VW to include these vehicles in the “Trust Building Measure? Are they now included? If not, what justification has VW given for this?
3. Your December 2017 letter acknowledged that VW owners had experienced issues following the application of the technical measures and reported that the Department had “pressed Volkswagen Group to ensure that these are being dealt with in an appropriate manner”. The Transport Committee continues to receive regular reports from owners who claim the applied “fix” has impaired their vehicle’s performance or reliability. **What is the Department’s assessment of the scale and nature of the problems associated with the technical measures, and what further steps are you taking to support owners who believe their cars have been affected adversely?**

4. I have previously emphasised, and it bears repeating here, that the UK’s inability to seek legal redress and apply financial sanctions against VW in the UK for its flagrant cheating contrasts starkly with stringent action taken in other countries, for instance the United States, where VW agreed to pay up to USD14.7 billion in penalties and compensation more than two years ago. **You have said that exploring options for action against VW in the UK was one of your key priorities on joining the Department; given that was nearly 18 months ago, what is your latest assessment of the prospects for legal action by the UK Government against VW Group in the UK?**

5. Your letter of 19 July 2018 stated that the Department was in discussions with legal firms preparing to litigate against Volkswagen Group in the UK, following the granting of a Group Litigation Order. You reported that the Department would “offer any reasonable support to help them seek justice on behalf of any affected UK consumers.” **What specific actions has the Department taken to help UK VW owners take legal action against VW Group in the UK?**

6. Your letter of 19 July 2018 emphasised legislative changes you have made following consultation earlier this year to strengthen penalties available against vehicle manufacturers that use defeat devices, including powers to “take action against any manufacturer who places a vehicle using a cheat device on the UK market”. **I should be grateful if you could set out in more detail these powers and the processes in place to exercise them effectively. How can you be confident that the new legislative framework will provide a sufficient deterrent against future cheating and a more solid basis for stringent enforcement?**

7. Your July 2018 letter reported results from testing by the Department’s new Market Surveillance Unit. **I should be grateful if you would set out in greater detail your plans for the unit, including how you intend to ensure that pre-market and post-market surveillance work together. Do you expect this approach to lead to further organisational changes within the Government’s motoring agencies, for instance merging of VCA and DVSA responsibilities?**
I look forward to receiving your reply as soon as possible, ideally no later than 31 December 2018.

Yours sincerely,

Lilian Greenwood MP
Chair of the Transport Select Committee