



HOUSE OF LORDS

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Dear David

I am writing, as Chairman of the House of Lords Science and Technology Select Committee, to express concern about claims that have surfaced in the media suggesting that the ring-fenced science budget may be used to shore up the Department's budget in other areas.

The Committee has welcomed the Government's commitment to science and applauds your role in promoting the value of scientific research. The Committee was particularly pleased at the outcome for science obtained at the recent Comprehensive Spending Review. It would, therefore, be most regrettable if the Government were now to undermine their commitment to science and their reputation in the sector by drawing on the ring-fenced science budget to plug gaps in the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills' (BIS) budget. Such an action would severely compromise the concept of ring-fencing and send a confusing signal to the science community.

There has been much to welcome in the Government's approach to science and I would urge you not to jeopardise the strength of the UK's science base. I sincerely hope that you can provide some reassurance to the Committee that the reports that have emerged in the press are misguided, and that the ring-fenced science budget remains secure for the long term. Furthermore, it would not be desirable for other BIS activities to be brought within the science ring-fence and thereby dilute the science budget.

I would be very happy to meet with you to discuss this letter. As is normal practice, a copy of this letter will be made available on the Committee's website.

As ever

Lord Krebs

Chairman of the Science and Technology Committee

The Rt Hon David Willetts MP
Minister of State for Universities and Science
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills