



HomeOwners
Alliance

Nick Boles MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Planning
Department for Communities and Local Government
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

24 December 2012

Dear Minister,

Extending permitted development rights for homeowners and businesses

Thank you for giving the HomeOwners Alliance the opportunity to respond to the government's proposed changes to extend permitted development rights. Attached you will find our response, which is broadly supportive of the government's proposals subject to some suggested changes. We believe that our suggestions - notification at commencement, a review at 2 years so the government can indicate in advance whether the changes will be made permanent, and a tighter definition of curtilage - are reasonable and practical and will help to address the concerns that have already been raised.

Although we support the government's desire to make it easier and cheaper for homeowners to build small-scale extensions, we are not convinced that these changes will do much to promote growth and bring extra work for local construction companies. If the government is serious about encouraging homeowners to improve their home and kickstart the construction industry, they should seriously consider reducing or removing the 20% rate of VAT on building extensions. The Isle of Man trialled a reduced rate, reviewed its impact and then successfully negotiated with the Treasury to make the reduced rate permanent. This should be extended to the rest of the UK.

About us

The HomeOwners Alliance (www.hoa.org.uk) is the first group in Britain dedicated to serving and championing Britain's 17 million homeowners and 5 million aspiring homeowners. Our aim is restore trust in homeownership, by providing independent advice and information, and lobbying for policies and industry practices to get a better deal for homeowners. The industry has many dozens of groups representing their interests, from the Council of Mortgage Lenders to the Federation of Master Builders, but up to now the homeowner has not had a voice.

I look forward to working with DCLG officials to help ensure that the voice of the consumer and homeowner is adequately represented in the development of policies.

Yours sincerely

Paula Higgins
Chief Executive

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