



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

21 March 1980

Dear Mr. Bjelke-Petersen,

Thank you for sending me details of the Horvath Energy System under your covering letter of 3 March. I have studied the report with interest. Our experts here have some reservations about the idea and about one or two of the claims made in the report, but I am most grateful to you for drawing the project to our attention. I have asked for some further enquiries to be made into it.

May I finally say that I too enjoyed our meeting during your visit to London.

Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher

The Honourable Johannes Bjelke-Petersen

RH



SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENERGY

THAMES HOUSE SOUTH

MILLBANK LONDON SW1P 4QJ

01 211 6402

Michael Alexander
Private Secretary to the
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON

18 March 1980

Dear Michael,

Thank you for your letter of 11 March. I have consulted our scientific experts on the "Horvath Energy System" which the Premier of Queensland drew to the attention of the Prime Minister.

The fact that hydrogen can be used to fuel a vehicle engine is well known and has been demonstrated on many occasions; suitable engines can perform well with it. However, hydrogen does not occur naturally in usable forms and a major industrial process must be used to produce it. The normal process is through electrolysis which means that electricity must be generated in nuclear or fossil fuelled stations. The route through from the original fuel to hydrogen is not very efficient nor is it pollution free when considered as a total system including the power station.

It is claimed that Mr Horvath uses a high voltage source to ionise the hydrogen before injection into the engine cylinder, thereby producing a controlled nuclear reaction. It is perhaps possible that an electric discharge at this point could produce higher efficiencies because of better mixing and a measure of pre-heating, but it is very doubtful indeed whether it would be effective either in cost or energy terms. It is nonsense to claim that controlled nuclear fusion takes place in the engine.

Thus, while not disputing at all that the car has been demonstrated we would need a great deal of convincing that the 'Horvath idea' had anything to offer.

While this gives you my views it leaves a real problem in responding to the Premier's letter.

I attach a draft letter which the Prime Minister may wish to send to the Premier of Queensland, although we appreciate that she may prefer a softer reply, possibly suggesting further consultations.

*Yours ever,
Bill*

W J BURROUGHS
PRIVATE SECRETARY



DRAFT LETTER FOR THE PRIME MINISTER TO SEND TO THE PREMIER OF QUEENSLAND

Thank you for sending me details of the Horvath Energy System under your covering letter of 3 March. I have studied the report with interest, ^{Our experts here} ~~but must confess to having~~ ^e some reservations about the idea ~~particularly in view of~~ ^{about} some of the claims made in the report. ~~However~~ ^{but} I am most grateful to you for drawing this ^e project to our attention. I ~~shall~~ have asked for some further enquiries to be made into it.

May I finally say that I too enjoyed our meeting during your visit to London.

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

11 March 1980

I enclose a copy of a letter to the Prime Minister from the Premier of Queensland together with the attachment to that letter. The attachment describes a new energy process based on the use of hydrogen in some form of nuclear reaction. Mr. Bjelke-Petersen spoke enthusiastically about the Horvath energy system to the Prime Minister when he called on her last month. Before submitting Mr. Bjelke-Petersen's letter to the Prime Minister I should be grateful for any comments that your Department has on Mr. Horvath's work. To the uninitiated it sounds like yet another "little black box" but its inventor seems to have obtained rather more backing than usual on this occasion!

Perhaps you could let me have the report back, together with your comments by Monday 17 March.

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

W.J. Burroughs, Esq.,
Department of Energy.

ABO