

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY FORUM

c/o The Institution of Environmental Sciences
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Lord De Mauley
Parliamentary Under Secretary, Defra
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London
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Thursday, 12th September 2013

Dear Lord De Mauley,

The need for a new Air Quality Strategy

The Environmental Policy Forum (EPF) is a network of UK environmental professional bodies promoting environmental sustainability and resilience for the public benefit. The EPF's member bodies have a collective membership of around 40,000 environmental professionals, many of whom are individually chartered in environmental practice, science and engineering disciplines.

The EPF believes that the UK is long overdue an updated Air Quality Strategy. The current Strategy was published in 2007 before the 2008 Air Quality Directive was adopted. Since then there has been growing evidence both of the failure the European directives to reduce exhaust emissions of nitrogen oxides for some vehicle classes, and a growing body of medical evidence that has strengthened the proof of the adverse health impacts of both nitrogen dioxide and various metrics of particulate matter. The Government must renew its efforts to improve ambient air quality for the protection of human health and ecosystems.

Defra has recently looked at reform of the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) process. We believe this review to be premature. The Government must first draw up a wider roadmap of how it intends to address poor air quality before it investigates implementation tools such as LAQM. This would be the sensible and proper order in which to approach reform. Without a new Air Quality Strategy, the Government's response to the air quality challenge risks being piecemeal and ineffective.

We welcome the Government's renewed interest in air quality, but this must not be at the expense of a wider discussion on public health and environmental concerns. Any serious attempt to improve air quality in the UK must be based on sound environmental science and evidence.

The EPF is committed to assisting the Government with its Air Quality policy, helping to meet its air quality targets and improve public health in the UK. We, the undersigned, would be pleased to meet and discuss this with you further.

Yours sincerely,



Claire Holman
IAQM Vice Chair & CIWEM Air Quality Chair



Adam Donnan
CEO, Institution of Environmental Sciences

For and on behalf of:

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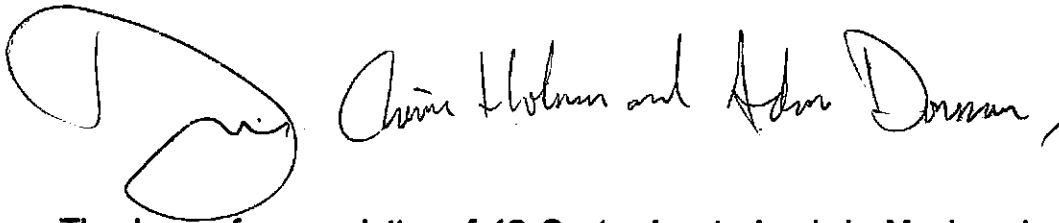
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From Dan Rogerson MP

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Water, Forestry, Rural Affairs and Resource Management



Thank you for your letter of 12 September to Lord de Mauley about the UK Air Quality Strategy and Defra's recent consultation on reforming Local Air Quality Management (LAQM). I am replying as the new Minister for this policy area and am sorry for the delay in doing so.

I note your comments about the need to review the current Air Quality Strategy, which was published in 2007. The Government is committed to making air cleaner across the UK and recognises the significant public health impacts arising from poor air quality. As you know we, along with most other Member States, face a significant challenge in meeting EU limits for nitrogen dioxide concentrations. In large part this is due to the failure of EU emission standards to deliver the reductions expected in real world driving conditions, especially for diesel vehicles. Ensuring that future EU emission standards can be relied on is therefore a priority, as is increasing the uptake of cleaner vehicles.

More broadly at EU level, the European Commission has spent the last year reviewing EU air quality legislation. In the next few weeks, it is expected to put forward a package including proposals for stricter ceilings on emissions of key pollutants and measures to control emissions from medium-sized combustion plants. Although the package will not include proposals to amend the limits for concentrations of pollutants under the Ambient Air Quality Directive, it may include significant changes to current legislation. The impact of these changes will need to be understood before a significant review of the UK Air Quality Strategy could be considered.



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The current Strategy continues to provide an important basis for our work to improve air quality. In addition, many of the measures assessed in the Strategy are being taken forward through policy measures to promote ultra-low-emission vehicles and measures to support emissions reductions from heavy-duty vehicles, including the Clean Bus Fund launched by the Department for Transport. Other aspects of the Strategy are also kept under review. The review of LAQM is one such area, where our consultation has sought views on how best to ensure that local action is primarily focused on what is necessary to improve local air quality and public health.

Thank you for offering to meet and discuss your views on air quality in more detail. We have had a large number of responses to the consultation on LAQM and these are being taken into consideration in the development of the next stage of the review. We expect to publish a summary of responses received by the end of the year, after which we will revisit offers of assistance to progress delivery of the next stages.



DAN ROGERSON MP