

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY FORUM

c/o Society for the Environment

EC1.1 Enterprise Centre, Coventry Technology Park, Coventry CV1 2TT

Mr George Eustice MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

26 February 2020

Dear Mr Eustice

Firstly may we congratulate you on your appointment as Environment Secretary.

At the beginning of a new Government and a new decade, we must seize what is a crucial moment for the future of the environment, as emphasised by the widespread declarations of Climate and Environmental Emergencies.

Some positive action has been taken to address these challenges, including but not limited to Parliament's declaration of a Climate Emergency, being one of the first countries in the world to commit to achieving Net-Zero greenhouse gas emissions, and the drafting of landmark legislation in the form of the Environment, Agriculture and Fisheries Bills.

Nevertheless, there is still more to be done to realise these commitments. We ask you to take immediate and lasting action to achieve the following environmental priorities:

1. Enshrining strong environmental principles and governance through the **Environment Bill**. It has been pleasing to see the Bill's re-introduction to Parliament and we welcome much of what is in the Bill. However, to be truly transformative, the Bill should:
 - i) Be founded on the Government's aspirations to have world-leading environmental standards such that it leaves the environment in a better state than it found it - providing assurance that the UK's environmental commitments, including net-zero by 2050, will be met.
 - ii) Build upon the Bill's current target-setting process; providing direction and accountability to the requirement for legally binding targets in the key environmental areas of air pollution, water, biodiversity and resources and waste. As such, targets should be based on clear criteria and measurable standards and must be ambitious, clearly defined and measurable, with adequate resourcing to ensure achievability. To ensure sufficient progress is made, robust monitoring of performance against the targets must be universally applied. We are concerned that currently the level of monitoring required is a matter for the consideration of the Environment Secretary.
 - iii) Address current concerns over the resourcing and independence of the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP). The OEP's powers to scrutinize, investigate, enforce and advise on environmental law and policy give it a hugely important role – but to have maximum benefit it must be resourced sufficiently to enable it to fulfil these functions. For example, a well-resourced OEP will have the ability to

identify opportunities for and encourage action across all Government departments which have the power to make a huge difference in delivering on the UK's environmental commitments. To ensure the OEP is able to sufficiently scrutinise Government policy, we also call for Parliament to be given a strong oversight role over the OEP, including influence over its resourcing and funding.

2. Implement measures and policies that help deliver on the commitment to achieve **net-zero greenhouse gas emissions**, many of which will also help to address the UK's declining biodiversity, such as:
 - i) The reform of the agriculture industry: backing up the Agriculture Bill and its ethos of 'Public Money for Public Goods' with support to farmers, to urgently move to more sustainable, agro-ecological and climate-friendly production.
 - ii) In line with the philosophy of a Circular Economy, embedding a policy of zero avoidable waste and implementing the resources and waste strategy. Set a measurable target to halve food loss and waste, recognising the extent of the problem and its contribution to the UK's greenhouse gas emissions.
 - iii) Harness the massive opportunities posed by COP26 and COP15 to push for greater international action to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss.

- 3) Implement policies which support **climate justice**; recognising the **integrated nature of environmental issues** and how environmental protection provides **social and economic benefit**.
 - i) Take strong action to improve air quality, including the implementation of legally binding targets on ambient concentration of, and reduction of exposure to, fine particulate matter (PM2.5). This will provide social benefit in addressing what is the biggest environmental risk to health, as well as an economic benefit, reducing the cost burden on the NHS of the impacts of air pollution.
 - ii) Deliver a Nature Recovery Network that also makes a significant contribution to improving the mental and physical health of the nation.
 - iii) Starting with the upcoming Budget, fully implement a sustainability skills agenda as part of a transition to a greener, cleaner economy. This will ensure that young people are equipped with the knowledge and skills they and employers need and support pathways into green jobs, including the retraining of those employed in carbon intensive industries.
 - iv) As host nation of COP26, work to ensure that the summit is truly accessible, allowing the public to contribute; with decisions made likely to carry significant impact for the lives of current and future generations, democratic participation is imperative.

Our organisations are committed to working with Government to achieve our mutual goal of an improved environment for future generations. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss our concerns with you further and to explore how we can best work with you by accessing the collective expertise of our members.

Yours sincerely,

Professor William Pope
Chair, Environmental Policy Forum

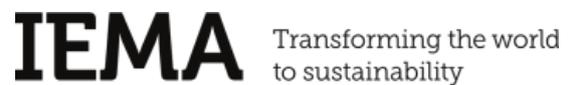
Chair, Society for the Environment



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1. 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 70,000 environmental

professionals, many of whom are individually chartered in environmental practice, science and engineering disciplines.

www.envpolicyforum.org.uk/

2. The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) is the leading professional membership body representing and supporting 5,000 ecologists and environmental managers in the UK, Ireland and abroad. Our Vision is of a society which values the natural environment and recognises the contribution of professional ecologists and environmental managers to its conservation.

www.cieem.net

3. The Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) is the membership body for more than 14,000 environment and sustainability professionals worldwide. We support individuals and organisations in setting and achieving globally recognised standards for sustainable practice, in turn driving the development and uptake of sustainability skills. We add value for our members by providing the knowledge, connections and recognition necessary to lead change within organisations at all levels. We are independent and international. We apply the combined expertise of our members to provide evidence and influence decision-making, working towards our vision of transforming the world to sustainability.

www.iema.net

4. The Institution of Environmental Sciences (IES) is a membership organisation that represents professionals from fields as diverse as air quality, land contamination and education - wherever you find environmental work underpinned by science. A visionary organisation leading debate, dissemination and promotion of environmental science and sustainability, the IES promotes an evidence-based approach to decision and policy making.

www.the-ies.org

5. The Institute of Fisheries Management (IFM) is an international organisation of people sharing a common interest in the modern management of recreational and commercial fisheries.

www.ifm.org.uk

6. The Landscape Institute (LI) is the chartered body for the landscape profession. It is an educational charity working to promote the art and science of landscape practice. The LI's aim, through the work of its members, is to protect, conserve and enhance the natural and built environment for the public benefit. The Landscape Institute provides a professional home for all landscape practitioners including landscape scientists, landscape planners, landscape architects, landscape managers and urban designers.

www.landscapeinstitute.org

7. The Society for the Environment (SocEnv) is comprised of 24 Licenced Bodies, with over 500,000 members between them. It received a Royal Charter in 2004, which empowers it to regulate the Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv) and Registered Environmental Technician (REnvTech) professional registrations globally. There are now over 7,000 environmental professionals currently registered who share a common vision of delivering sustainability through environmental professionalism.

www.socenv.org.uk



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27 April 2020

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 26 February about climate change and the Environment Bill and for your kind words of congratulation on my reappointment as Parliamentary Under Secretary of State. Your letter of the same date to the Rt Hon the Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park has also been passed to me to reply. I apologise for the delay in doing so. Defra is currently dealing with high volumes of correspondence due to COVID-19. Thank you for your understanding during this challenging time.

There is no doubt that climate change and biodiversity loss are two of the most profound global challenges we face. The decisions we make today will affect the future of our planet for generations to come, and the Government recognises that further action is urgently needed in our own country and across the world. This is why the UK has committed to making nature-based solutions to climate change a key focus of the COP26 climate conference: these are vital for addressing biodiversity loss, climate change and poverty in a sustainable way.

Our Climate Change Act 2008 was the first of its kind in the world and set a legally binding target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% by 2050 relative to 1990 levels. On the advice of our climate experts – the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) – we have scaled up our ambition and, in June 2019, set a world-leading net zero target in law. We are already making progress towards that target - between 1990 and 2017, the UK reduced its emissions by over 40% while growing the economy by more than two thirds. We recognise the need to go further and the Clean Growth Strategy sets out our plans to build on our progress in decarbonising the power sector, alongside ambitious proposals on housing, business, transport, the natural environment and green finance. More details about the Clean Growth Strategy can be found at:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-growth-strategy.

We are bringing forward the first Environment Bill in over 20 years with ambitious measures to address the biggest environmental priorities of our age, including restoring and enhancing nature. The Bill lays the foundation for the Nature Recovery Network. In addition to setting the framework for at least one legally binding target for biodiversity, it establishes spatial mapping and planning tools to help inform nature recovery and, sitting alongside our plans for introducing a new Environmental Land Management Scheme, the actions and incentives to drive change on the ground. During the course of the Environment Bill there will be opportunities to input into many consultations and your expertise would be valued in doing so.



Our Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme is the cornerstone of our new agricultural policy. Founded on the principle of “public money for public goods”, ELM is intended to provide a powerful vehicle for achieving the goals of the 25 Year Environment Plan and commitment to net zero emissions by 2050, while supporting our rural economy. Farmers and other land managers may enter into agreements to be paid for delivering the following public goods: clean air; clean and plentiful water; thriving plants and wildlife; reduction in and protection from environmental hazards; beauty, heritage and engagement with the environment; mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.

As you note, the Nature Recovery Network - an expanding and increasingly connected network of places that are richer in wildlife - will provide wider benefits for people and the environment, from recreational opportunities to climate mitigation and adaptation. Our wetlands, peatlands, forests, grasslands and saltmarshes capture carbon and provide ‘ecosystem services’, such as flood management, urban cooling and pollination. We are developing the partnerships and spatial prioritisation tools that will support delivery of the Network, and integrating the Network’s objectives into our financial incentives, such as the ELM scheme. In our recent budget, the Government also announced up to £25 million for a Nature Recovery Network Fund.

The UK has legally binding limits and targets for concentrations of major air pollutants, and has signed up to ambitious, national emission reduction targets for five key pollutants to be achieved by 2020 and 2030. Our Clean Air Strategy sets out the comprehensive action required across Government to deliver these targets and secure significant public health benefits. The Environment Bill delivers key parts of the Strategy. It includes a duty to set a target on fine particulate matter (PM2.5), the air pollutant that has the most significant impact on human health. This target will go beyond EU requirements.

The Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy is the lead Government department responsible for reducing emissions to mitigate climate change, while Defra is responsible for efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the following sectors – agriculture, waste, land-use fluorinated gases (F-gases) - and to promote forestry. Defra also leads on domestic adaptation and strengthening resilience to climate change risks.

Thank you once again for taking the time to contact me about these important issues. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance with this or any other matters in the future.



REBECCA POW MP



2020-0006709POSoS

Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP
Secretary of State

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Professor William Pope, Chair
Environmental Policy Forum, c/o Society for the Environment
By email: sarah.ridgeon@socenv.org.uk

11th March 2020

Thank you for your letter of 26 February, congratulating me on my reappointment, outlining the priorities of the Environmental Policy Forum, and inviting me to meet with you. I would be grateful if you could forward this response to the other signatories.

It is a real honour to continue as Secretary of State for Education and I look forward to continuing the work on implementing the government's reforms with the clear backing of the British people.

Talent is evenly spread in this country, but opportunity is not. Every child, in every part of the country, should have a fair chance. My priority is to drive up standards and ensure that our children and young people can have the best start in life, wherever they are from. To be in this role and to be able to be part of delivering this agenda is something that really excites me.

It is important that young people are taught about climate change and sustainability, and both are included as part of the science and geography curricula and qualifications. In addition, my department supports sustainability as part of our capital funding programmes which help to reduce carbon emissions and save schools money on energy. Schools can use their condition funding to invest in energy efficiency improvements.

Sustainability will also be included in T Levels content, the new post-16 technical study programmes. When designing course content, the T Level panels of employers and industry experts must consider sustainability where relevant to their sector. For example, in construction, T Level students will be required to learn about renewable energy and emerging technologies to support energy efficiency.

More broadly, the government is adopting an 'all of society' approach to the upcoming 26th session of the UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP 26), by encouraging real-world action from business, civil society, cities and the science community. Young people are an important voice and we recognise they are calling for urgent action. Therefore, we are committed to involving young people in the planning and hosting of COP 26.

Thank you for your kind invitation to meet. My office is aware of your request and will be in touch if I am able to do so in the near future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gavin Williamson', written in a cursive style.

Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP
Secretary of State for Education