

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

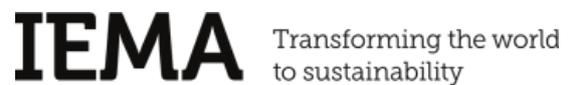
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1. The Environmental Policy Forum (EPF) is a network of UK environmental professional bodies promoting environmental sustainability and resilience for the public benefit. The EPF's member bodies have a collective membership of around 70,000 environmental

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