



Rebecca Pow MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
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Date: 14 October

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Dear Secretary of State

Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill (CEE Bill)

Thank you for your letter dated 15 May 2021 in response to my joint letter with Jane Healey, Chair of the Greenprint Forum, of 10 December 2020.

We note the ambition of the Resources and Waste Strategy but await with interest detail of the Government's commitment to additional resources that local authorities will need if they are to deliver on their contribution to its implementation. We also welcome your reassurances that the Government agrees there is no place for built-in obsolescence of goods and that it is the intention of the Environment Bill to facilitate informed choices by consumers.

Whilst we await your response to our latest joint letter of 10 May 2021, I am now writing on behalf of East Suffolk Council's (ESC) cross-party Environment Task Group (ETG), with concern to the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill currently progressing through Parliament, which has been discussed both by the Council's ETG and also by its Full Council.

Whilst the Council and its ETG may not necessarily agree with all aspects of the CEE Bill as it has been drafted and it cannot, by itself, be the whole answer to the challenges we face, there are nonetheless some key objectives and principles that we consider to be positive steps forward to help underpin the Environment Plan and the broader societal changes that will be necessary if we, as a country, are to achieve our climate and environmental goals.

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In particular, we would urge the Government to use primary legislation to ensure that the two main objectives of the CEE Bill are written into law, that is to:

- act to ensure that the UK reduces its contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions at a rate consistent with the obligation made under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement to keep global mean temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels; and
- to halt and reverse the degradation and loss of nature and put it visibly and measurably on the path to recovery by 2030, in accordance with the delivery of the Leader's Pledge for Nature made by Boris Johnson at the UN Summit on Biodiversity last September.

In addition, as a Council and an ETG, we are in agreement with the following principles of the current draft of the CEE Bill that would form the strategy for achieving those objectives:

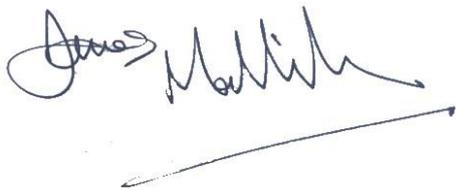
- reducing emissions caused by human activity as far and as rapidly as possible; this is in accordance with the hierarchy of action which puts reduction at the top and is also in alignment with ESC's own emerging corporate Climate Action Plan that will prioritise actions that reduce our emissions in the first place;
- ensuring that steps taken to mitigate emissions do not damage ecosystems, food and water availability, and human health;
- ensuring that steps taken to increase the health, abundance, diversity and resilience of species, populations and ecosystems follow the mitigation and conservation hierarchy, with avoidance of the loss of nature prioritised. For example, we feel it is far better not to chop down a tree in the first place, than to have to plant one to replace one lost;
- restoring and expanding natural ecosystems, and enhancing the management of cultivated ecosystems to protect and enhance biodiversity, ecological processes and ecosystem service provision, including climate change mitigation;
- including measures to protect, restore and enhance ecosystems in the United Kingdom, where activity is generated from within the United Kingdom that is harmful to ecosystems;
- ensuring an end to the exploration, extraction, export and import of fossil fuels by the United Kingdom as rapidly as possible; and
- taking every possible step to avoid impacts of United Kingdom-generated cycles of consumption, trade and production on ecosystems and human health; including, but not limited to, the extraction of raw materials, deforestation, land degradation, pollution and waste production.

The climate and ecological crisis that our environment is facing is too important a matter for it to become politicised. Instead, we feel that it should be possible for consensus to be reached on those elements of the Bill which will clearly help to strengthen the wider framework required for positive action to take place.

I hope that this letter encourages the Government to make positive use of the opportunity that the CEE Bill has presented, at a time when scrutiny of Government commitment to this agenda, both at home and internationally has never been higher, during the hosting of COP26 by the UK.

I look forward to receiving your response to this letter and to our previous letter of 10 May 2021.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Mallinder'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end. Below the signature is a long, thin horizontal line with an arrowhead pointing to the right.

Cllr James Mallinder
Cabinet Member for the Environment
Chair of the Environment Task Group