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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
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Yr. M. James

Prime Minister

Ken Stowe Esq CB
Principal Private Secretary to
the Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1

It would be silly to
put this out over the
weekend. We can

8 June 1979 reconsider next
week. Agree?

It would really
mislead me if that sort of
advice were put out!

DL
8/6

Dear Ken

ms.

I understand that your Press Office and the Department of Energy both take the view that it would be advisable if no further Government advice were issued to motorists this weekend about the need to save fuel.

However, circumstances could change, and a statement might be needed after all. My Minister thought it would be useful if he had a short statement ready if required. He had prepared the attached draft advice, which draws on and elaborates Mr Howell's statement earlier this week. He would be prepared to authorise its issue at any time if the Prime Minister thought that it would be helpful.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Bill Burroughs.

Yours

Genie

MRS E C FLANAGAN
Private Secretary

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DRAFT PRESS STATEMENT:

MINISTER ADVISES MOTORISTS TO CONSERVE FUEL

In a message to motorists today Mr Fowler said:

"The Government has called for consumers to cut their consumption of oil by at least 5%. I appeal to all motorists to contribute their share to this target. Road transport accounts for nearly 30% of total energy consumption of oil products in the UK - well over half of which is used by private cars. The scope for saving is very substantial if all car users carried out some simple economies. For each motorist there would be only a tiny effect on his own mobility, but in total this could make a big contribution to our energy saving target."

Mr Fowler had the following advice for motorists:

"Think twice about getting your car out, especially when your journey is short or when you can take a bus or train instead. If you do need to travel by car and especially if you are a commuter, then whenever possible share it with others.

Drive more carefully and be more gentle with the brake and the accelerator. In particular drive more slowly. The average family car uses 36% more fuel at 70 mph than at 50 mph.

Make sure your car is properly maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions. It has been estimated that, if the engines of all cars were properly tuned, up to 5% of the

fuel used could be saved.

Fill up with petrol only when you need to. Drivers who insist on a full tank at all times cause shortages and long delays and frustration at service stations. If all drivers applied these rules for themselves, there would be substantial savings in our consumption of oil, as well as enough fuel for everyone.

NOTE FOR EDITORS

The Minister in his statement encouraged people to make more use of public transport and car sharing. Both are good ways of making better use of fuel for transport. Since the 1978 Transport Act private motorists have been able to carry in their cars up to 7 passengers at separate fares.

Insurance arrangements are not a ban to giving lifts, or accepting a contribution to the cost. Vehicles must still be properly insured. The motor conference clarified the position last year in the following terms.

"The receipt of contributions as part of a car-sharing arrangement for social or other similar purposes in respect of the carriage of passengers on a journey in a vehicle insured under a private car policy will not be regarded as constituting the carriage of passengers for hire or reward (or the use of the vehicle for hiring) provided that:

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- a. the vehicle is not constructed or adapted to carry more than seven passengers (excluding the Driver);
- b. the passengers are not being carried in the course of a business of carrying passengers;
- c. the total contributions received for the journey concerned do not involve an element of profit.

Note

If in any doubt whether a car-sharing arrangement is covered by the terms of a private car policy, the policy holders concerned should make an enquiry to their motor insurers.

The private motorist can advertise lifts in his church, work place and club (and their periodicals). But under the present law he cannot advertise to the general public unless the local authorities and traffic commissioners are satisfied that it is a "social car scheme" i.e. for welfare purposes.



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

11 June 1979

I have shown the Prime Minister your letter of 8 June and the attached draft Press Statement advising motorists to conserve fuel.

The Prime Minister does not think it would be wise to put out such a Statement, which - in her view - would tend to irritate many motorists and would not save much fuel.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Bill Burroughs (Department of Energy).

T. P. LANKESTER

Mrs. E. C. Flanagan,
Department of Transport.

[Handwritten signature]