



Prime Minister

Prime Minister

Content with Mr Heseltine's and Mr Edwards' proposal to abolish the Water Space Amenity Commission, but to retain the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council?

Agreed
no

WR
14/5

With Nicholas Edwards' agreement, I seek your approval to an announcement that the Water Space Amenity Commission (WSAC) should be abolished. WSAC is the satellite of the National Water Council (NWC), set up under the Water Act 1973 to advise me, the NWC and water authorities on water recreation and amenity matters. All the water authority chairmen are ex officio members of it, and there are ten other members. It costs about £83,000 a year, financed by the NWC. It serves no purpose which could not equally well be handled by the Committee of water authority chairmen we agreed recently at E Committee should succeed the NWC.

At the same time, I propose to announce that we have decided not to proceed with the proposal to abolish, as soon as there was a legislative opportunity, the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council (IWAAC). I have come under strong pressure to retain IWAAC from a number of colleagues (especially Tony Durant, Chairman of our Environment Committee, and Eldon Griffiths), the private sector boating interests, including tour operators and the trusts who are involved in the restoration of canals, and the British Waterways Board, who stress the importance of such a representative body with whom to discuss waterways problems.



On reflection, and in view of the low costs of IWAAC - about £30,000 a year, provided by the British Waterways Board - I believe a reprieve will be well received in the House and outside.

If you agree, I would like to announce the decisions to abolish WSAC and to retain IWAAC at the same time as I make an announcement about abolishing the NWC.

I am copying this minute to Nicholas Edwards.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "M H".

M H

13 MAY 81

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CF

2 July 1981

Thank you for your letter of 30 June saying that your Secretary of State wished to announce the Government's decision to retain the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council.

The Prime Minister is content for your Secretary of State to make such an announcement, provided that the Secretary of State for Wales is also content.

I am copying this letter to Martin Rolph (Welsh Office).

W F S RICKETT

Jeff Channing, Esq.,
Department of the Environment

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Prime Minister
 Content subject to
 Mr Edwards' agreement?
 2 MARSHAM STREET
 LONDON SW1P 3EB

WR
 1/7
 My ref:
 Your ref:

Yes
 not

30 JUN 81

Dear Willie

You wrote to me on 15 May confirming the Prime Minister's agreement to the abolition of the Water Space Amenity Commission and the retention of the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council.

It was the Secretary of State's intention to announce the retention of IWAAC at the same time as he announced the abolition of the National Water Council and WSAC. The case for keeping IWAAC arises from pressure from waterways user interest, the British Waterways Board and, indeed, colleagues, and is not tied to any proposals for restructuring the water industry. The Secretary of State therefore believes that there would be considerable goodwill to be gained from announcing the Government's intentions towards IWAAC as soon as possible and he therefore seeks the Prime Minister's agreement to making an announcement shortly.

I am copying this letter to Martin Rolfe (Welsh Office).

Yours ever

Jeff Channing.

J P CHANNING
 Private Secretary

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

15 May 1981

The Prime Minister was grateful for the Secretary of State for the Environment's minute of 13 May. She is content with his proposals to announce the abolition of the Water Space Amenity Commission, and the retention of the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council, when he announces the abolition of the National Water Council.

I am copying this letter to Martin Rolph (Welsh Office).

W. F. S. RICKETT

Jeff Channing, Esq.,
Department of the Environment.

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