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The Rt Hon Nicholas Ridley AMICE MP
Secretary of State for the Environment
2 Marsham Street
LONDON
SW1P 3EB

8 December 1986

Dear Nick,

AIR POLLUTION CONTROL: CONSULTATION PAPER

WILL REQUEST IF REQUIRED

Thank you for copying to me your letter of 24 November to Willie Whitelaw about your proposals for air pollution control.

I understand that my officials in the Health and Safety Executive and the Enterprise and Deregulation Unit (EDU) have commented on earlier drafts of the consultation paper and have provided some further suggestions about its presentation. As you point out, the main proposals have been the subject of a Preliminary Compliance Cost Assessment. This provided a good picture of the proposals and I am very content that we should now go ahead to consultation.

However previous drafts did not anticipate that charges should be levied on industry as part of the consent procedure. I have seen John MacGregor's letter of 4 December which suggests that local authorities should be given a power to charge. This would add to the industries' burdens and I would suggest that it should certainly not be announced at this stage until it has been fully considered in the current review of local authority fees and charges.

I assume that you will meet EDU's concern that the paper should be circulated to the small business organisations as well as the larger industries. Subject to the minor drafting changes that officials have proposed, I am content that you should proceed as you propose.

I am copying this letter to Willie Whitelaw, other members of 'H' committee and to Peter Walker, Michael Jopling and Sir Robert Armstrong.

KENNETH CLARKE