cc BG

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD
WHITEHALL PLACE, LONDON SW1A 2HH

From the Minister

NBPM

The Rt Hon John Major MP
Chief Secretary to the Treasury
Treasury Chambers
Parliament Street
London SW1P 3AG

10 June 1988

Dear John,

Rap

THE THIRD REPORT OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE: POLLUTION OF RIVERS AND ESTUARIES

Thank you for copying to me your letter of 8 June to Nicholas Ridley. I should like to address in turn the three points you have raised.

First, on the question of water environment protection zones (a separate issue from water source protection zones which would affect drinking water) although the present legislation could allow for such zones to be set up, we have pointed out before that we do not think it would be practicable to try and impose controls on agriculture within large-area zones designed to protect environment in the round. That was the point I was making in my letter to Nicholas Ridley.

Second, on the point about the derogation from EC rules to permit 60 per cent grant rates mentioned in paragraph 3.14, I would have no strong objection to the removal of the words "and hard-won".

Finally on paragraph 3.16, I am afraid I would still prefer to see the fifth sentence - referring to grant aid as an inefficient means - deleted. The House of Commons Committee positively recommends that grant aid be extended to maintenance work, and in the preceding sentence of the response, the text already does enough to point out the disadvantages that would follow from such an approach. To include the following sentence could needlessly irritate the Committee.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Nicholas Ridley, and other members of E(A) and to Sir Robin Butler.

Yours ever,

John

JOHN MacGREGOR

GW Affairs - Acid Rain