

CCBG

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



NBRM

From the Minister

The Rt Hon Nicholas Ridley MP  
Secretary of State for the Environment  
Department of the Environment  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1

13 June 1988

Dear Secretary of State,

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

Thank you for your letter of 10 June on the draft response to the Committee. <sup>Alan</sup>

I have also seen the letter of 11 June from No 10 indicating the Prime Minister's agreement to the paragraph on health risk, subject to her redraft of the final sentence. I agree we should now accept this.

I am sorry to have to come back on what is now the sole outstanding point to resolve - the question of water environment protection zones (w.e.p.zs) - and here I must reiterate our view that these should not be referred to within the text of the response. (These are of course a separate issue from water source protection zones, which remain one option for addressing the problem of nitrate in water.) My Department has in recent years mounted a number of initiatives to encourage farmers to conserve the environment by voluntary means: we see a risk that through mentioning w.e.p.zs we could encourage the Green lobby to press for wide-ranging measures on nature protection, thus putting in jeopardy our entire policy of persuasion rather than coercion. I would therefore prefer to see a blander form of words in the text and would suggest in paragraph 1.15 "... undertakers; and re-enactment of the existing provisions of S31(5) of COPA which allow protection zones to be established." I hope you will be able to live with this, particularly as your original draft in any case saw w.e.p.zs being established only on an exceptional basis.

/I am copying this ...

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

*Yours sincerely*

*John MacGregor*

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JOHN MacGREGOR

Approved by the Minister and  
Signed in his absence

ENV AFFAIRS Acid Rain PTS



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