

Prime Minister



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NOX PROTOCOL AND DECLARATION

in PM's Box

I have seen Nicholas Ridley's minute of 14 October describing the approach he proposes the UK adopts in response to a "30% NO_x Club" Declaration in Sofia next month.

I agree entirely with Nicholas that the success of our economic policies means that any commitment to reduce UK NO_x emissions by 30% by 1998 would have to be backed by further major investment in emission controls in the electricity, industrial and transport sectors.

With regard to power stations, this would involve requiring the retrofiting of existing stations with enhanced ("second generation") low-NO_x burners, which have yet to be developed, and the installation at new stations of selective catalytic reduction technology which has yet to be proven in commercial operation. The costs of such programmes at the present stage would be very high and would have implications for electricity costs and our electricity privatisation programme.

Similar action would probably also be necessary at refineries and other industrial plant where there is even less experience of the technologies involved than in the power generation sector. Action in the transport sector would jeopardise the efficiency benefits attached to lean-burn technologies and increase the "greenhouse effect".

I therefore fully support Nicholas' proposed UK stance, which underlines the tight, but realistic timescale built into the Protocol for genuine, scientifically-based progress on this issue.

I am copying this minute to Nicholas Ridley and the recipients of his minute.

CP

Secretary of State for Energy

21st October 1988



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COOPER