

PRIME MINISTER

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH REPORT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

The Department of the Environment have prepared a defensive point by point brief on the Friends of the Earth document, but I think you need to attack it on the broad front making four points.

1. It fails to view the environment as a whole and proposes a series of inchoate measures without understanding their overall effect: it is unrelievedly hostile to nuclear power. Yet it calls for urgent action to cut sulphur dioxide and greenhouse gas emissions which come from fossil fuel power stations.
2. It implies that no action is worthwhile unless it is Government regulation. The quote in the Times on the report refers to the 50 per cent cut in CFC use through a voluntary approach as "manifest dishonesty", notwithstanding the success of the voluntary approach in getting us to the Montreal protocol target of a 50 per cent cut ten years ahead of time.
3. Some of their claims are simply wrong: they refer to failure to clean up Britain's severely polluted river estuaries and basins, including the Mersey. The Government has embarked on a £4 billion programme to clean up the Mersey basin. The Thames is the cleanest metropolitan estuary in the world. The Tyne, Forth, Humber and Tees all support salmon which is more than can be said for most European estuarial rivers.
4. You will want to attack the underlying mentality of a return to medieval village economy. This is a fraud on both the people of this country and, not least, on the Third World.

  
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# THE GREEN GAUNTLET



Testing the Government's Commitment to the Environment

Recent statements by Mrs Thatcher have raised expectations that the British Government will now seriously address environmental problems such as global warming, marine pollution, the import of toxic waste, acid rain and the decline of the seal population. Inevitably, scepticism has been expressed about whether such "green" promises will be backed up by action, given the Governments very poor record on environmental matters over the last nine years.

Accordingly, a "Green Gauntlet" checklist of practical environmental measures has been compiled by Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, and the World Wide Fund For Nature. All these proposals can be initiated or completed within the life of the current government.

We shall be monitoring performance on these proposals between now and the next General election in order to assess the extent to which the Government is genuinely concerned about the environment.



GREENPEACE



Friends of the Earth

## THE GREEN GAUNTLET

A key priority for the Government is to publish a comprehensive White Paper on Environment and Conservation. There has been no formal overview statement of policy on the environment produced at any time (the slim 1970 White Paper dealt only with some aspects of environmental pollution).

The Government should introduce measures immediately to implement the following policies:

### Energy

1. Provide adequate funding for the Energy Efficiency Office, and introduce a range of measures, including appliance labelling, to improve energy efficiency by at least 3% per year. The start date should be 1989. At current rates of economic growth, this will reduce national energy consumption by 1% per year. This is the quickest and most cost-effective way of reducing carbon dioxide's contribution to the greenhouse effect.
2. Withdraw proposals to create a protected status for nuclear power after privatisation, and end all further feather-bedding for the industry through any hidden 'nuclear tax'. Halt the plans and public inquiry into the building of Hinkley C nuclear power station until after privatisation.
3. Oblige OFELEC (the Regulatory Authority for the privatised electricity industry) to adopt the principle of 'least cost planning' so that distribution companies are required to identify the cheapest ways of meeting consumers' needs, including reductions in energy demand as an alternative to developing new sources of supply.
4. End all current radioactive discharges from Sellafield into the Irish Sea. Modify the design of the Thermal Oxide Reprocessing Plant at present under construction to ensure zero emissions.

### Pollution

5. Enforce the 'Polluter Pays Principle' by effective prosecution of offenders through the imposition of substantial fines, which reflect the scale of the environmental costs caused by the offence. Implement the 'precautionary principle', whereby the polluter has to prove that the discharges do not pose a risk to the environment, whether land, air or water.

### Hazardous Wastes

6. Press for a ban on transboundary shipments of hazardous waste both between EEC member states, and between the EEC and other countries, as a priority first step to ensure responsibility for the environmentally safe management of hazardous waste by the producer country. This is vital in order to achieve a substantial reduction in the production of hazardous waste.
7. End all sea dumping of industrial waste by 1st January 1989 and halt the disposal of sewage sludge at sea as soon as it is technically feasible. Introduce a legislative programme that will ensure a 50% reduction at source of toxic discharges into rivers and seas by 1995.
8. Implement the outstanding sections of the Control of Pollution Act (Part 2), and ensure that Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution has the statutory authority and necessary enforcement powers to control pollution from all sources in an integrated way.

### Air Pollution

9. Set emission standards for power stations based on the pollution tolerance of natural ecosystems. This will require a reduction in sulphur dioxide emissions of at least 80-90% and a minimum reduction in nitrogen oxide emissions of 75% - as soon as is technically feasible. Begin immediately a programme of installing Selective Catalytic Reduction plants, or other equally effective technology, to power stations in order to significantly reduce emissions of nitrogen oxides.

10. Cut air pollution from diesel and petrol driven vehicles by:
  - a) Introducing US emission standards for nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons and particulates, and press for the implementation of these standards throughout the EEC.
  - b) Abolishing the current £2.4 billion tax subsidy for company cars at the next budget.
  - c) Setting targets to double fuel economy of cars and light trucks by the year 2000.
11. Implement a programme to end the production and consumption of ozone depleting chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and halons in the UK by 1995 at the latest, and press for a similar initiative to be implemented through the Montreal Protocol at its next review.
12. Phase out 2-star petrol immediately, and introduce a 15p differential between unleaded petrol and leaded petrol.

### Wildlife and Countryside

13. Give absolute statutory protection to all Sites of Special Scientific Interest as soon as possible and provide effective legislation for the establishment of Marine Nature Reserves. Introduce a detailed strategy for marine fish farming to ensure that important marine areas are not adversely affected by the fast growing industry. Landscape conservation orders should be made available to all local authorities, and should be used without compensation for those affected by them (except in exceptional circumstances).
14. Introduce selective planning controls over intensive agriculture, forestry and the water industry.
15. Protect threatened species by closing the enormous loophole in the Wildlife and Countryside Act which allows them to be killed as the incidental result of a lawful operation.

In particular, protect marine mammals by:

- a) Prohibiting the killing of all seals throughout Great Britain using powers that already exist in Conservation of Seals Act, 1970.
  - b) Taking special steps to safeguard areas used by porpoises, dolphins and seals.
16. Fully comply with our international obligations under the Bern Convention, the EC Birds Directive, and the Ramsar Convention, in particular rapid designation of all sites that meet the criteria under the latter two, and take better account of the undertaking for the wise use of wetlands.

Take a leading role in pressing for the adoption of an EC Directive on the conservation of threatened species and their habitats.
  17. Press for inclusion of the Cairngorms and the Flow Country of Sutherland and Caithness in the World Heritage List.

### Agriculture and Pesticides

18. Issue a White Paper with a view to replacing the Agriculture Act of 1947 with new legislation, based on a statutory code of 'good agricultural practice' specifically designed to ensure environmentally sensitive farming throughout the countryside.
19. Progressively reduce price support, and redirect public subsidy for farming through structural measures and direct income aid to farmers.
20. Reduce nitrogen use by, for example, quotas, taxes or direct controls, and press other EEC member states to do the same. Establish Water Protection Zones immediately.



21. Amend the current 'set-aside scheme' to include top-up payments for environmentally sensitive management. As soon as is practical, the scheme itself should be transformed into a Comprehensive Extensification Scheme, including transitional grants for farmers wishing to develop organic practices, and a programme for positive habitat creation enhancement.
22. Suspend immediately the approvals for use of some 150 older pesticides, pending the results of comprehensive data reviews and safety testing under modern standards. Enforce strict controls on pesticide use in water catchment areas which are particularly sensitive to pollution and/or where drinking water sources are already polluted.
23. Establish strict quality objectives for pesticide levels in the environment, based on a scientific determination of the levels needed to safeguard human health and the environment, and then through ecologically sensitive and statistically sound monitoring of air, water and the biota.

### **Recycling**

24. Introduce a resource tax on specific raw materials to make reclamation more economically attractive.
25. Introduce legislation to ensure the use of packaging materials designed for re-use or recycling; to make glass products like bottles and jars returnable; and to ensure that the relevant industries provide recycling facilities.

### **Transport**

26. Review the public inquiry system for new roads to ensure that for every new scheme there is a full traffic appraisal, economic evaluation, and assessment of environmental and social impacts.
27. Implement measures to control vehicle use and emissions through changes in transport policy. These should include promoting the use of public transport, shifting freight from road to rail, enforcing or reducing speed limits, etc.

### **Overseas Aid and Debt**

28. Increase the overall size of the aid budget to at least 0.7% of GNP in line with the United Nations target. Ensure that the proportion of the aid budget spent on renewable natural resources, environmental assessment for all aid spending, and on sustainable management and ecosystem conservation projects constitutes a majority of the bilateral aid budget.
29. Ensure that Britain only supports multilateral development projects which are environmentally sustainable and do not destroy the homelands, or override the rights, of tribal peoples without their consent.
30. Strengthen its debt initiatives for the poorer sub-Saharan African countries and other similarly impoverished countries by pressing for greater debt relief for more countries on debts owed to agencies such as the World Bank and European Development Fund, including outright cancellation of bad debts.