



Dominic
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My ref:

Your ref:

Dominic Morris Esq
Private Secretary to
The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
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9 March 1989

Dear Dominic,

Thank you for your letter of 23 February concerning Lord Weinstock's proposals on evaporative emissions.

Evaporative emissions from petrol driven vehicles have no effect on the stratospheric ozone layer. They do, however, in combination with exhaust emissions of NOx and hydrocarbons contribute to the formation of ozone in the lower atmosphere which, though it plays only a minor role in the greenhouse effect, is an environmental human health pollutant implicated in tree and crop damage and effects on human health.

Evaporative controls are being discussed within the European Community in order to reduce road transport hydrocarbon emissions. The Commission is expected to produce proposals soon for fitting carbon canisters to cars as a control measure. It is estimated that this will deal with the bulk of the evaporative emissions from motor vehicles.

Evaporative controls at the petrol pump are required in much of the United States. Such measures in the UK would certainly reduce hydrocarbon emissions further, but there are costs and practical problems to be considered.

We do not, at present, have an estimate of the costs for the UK of such measures.

One problem in producing a sensible cost and benefits analysis is the so called salami effect. Because the whole petrol production marketing and use chain has so many links it is possible, by controlling some of the links to make further step by step controls seem very costly for the benefits obtained. In further work we are therefore considering the chain as a whole. The emissions at the pump are a fairly minor link.

We will continue to keep evaporative controls for the petrol chain under investigation. There are now international discussions on hydrocarbon reductions, including within the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and we expect to develop our policy in parallel with these initiatives.

Please let me know if you would like any further information.

Yours,
Deborah

DEBORAH LAMB
Private Secretary