

Rt Hon Andrea Leadsom MP
Secretary of State Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
Nobel House, 17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR

24 April 2017

Dear Rt Hon Andrea Leadsom,

Re: Reasoned opinion to the United Kingdom concerning continued air pollution breaches

We are contacting you with regard to the European Commission's reasoned opinion, issued on 15th February 2017, concerning persistent breaches of NO₂ limit values in the United Kingdom.

In its notice, the European Commission urged the UK to address repeated breaches of legal air pollution limits in 16 areas including London, Birmingham, Leeds, and Glasgow within two months of its receipt in order to ensure good air quality and safeguard public health.

As the UK's air pollution crisis needlessly claims the lives of more than 50,000 people in Britain every year and costs the British public more than £20bn annually, we strongly welcomed the Commission's call on the UK Government to finally face up to its moral and legal responsibility for tackling Britain's air quality crisis.

There is strong evidence that, where embraced and enforced, EU air pollution limits are helping to prevent thousands of deaths every year and saving billions of pounds in direct health costs.

As you are aware, the two-month deadline, which has now passed, also requires the Government to consult the public on any plan submitted to the EU. This is separate but similar to the UK's need to publish a plan by 4pm today, ordered by the High Court, to comply with the NO₂ limit values 'as soon as possible'. We understand that the UK is seeking to postpone this action due to the General Election, despite consultation guidelines allowing it to proceed, and are very concerned by this development.

In light of the above information, we would be grateful if you could comment on whether you have submitted a response to the Commission outlining if and how the UK is acting to reduce its emissions in order to comply with EU legislation on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe (Directive 2008/50/EC) and when you are planning on seeking public input on its plans.

If this is the case, could you please outline if you are confident that the chosen measures are sufficient to meet the UK's obligations under EU law?

We would like to urge you once again to act decisively to make sure the UK abides by and fully implements EU air quality laws.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith Taylor". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the bottom.

Keith Taylor, Green MEP for South East England

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Molly Scott Cato". The signature is cursive and elegant.

Molly Scott Cato, Green MEP for South West England

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. D. Lambert". The signature is cursive and includes a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Jean Lambert, Green MEP for London