



City of Westminster

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Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP
Secretary of State
Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3RJ

1st June 2015

Dear Ms Truss

Improving air quality in central London

We understand that you are preparing a draft Air Quality Plan to submit to the European Commission to detail how the limit value for annual average nitrogen dioxide will be met across the United Kingdom. The development of the Air Quality Plan is an opportunity to take bold action to reduce levels of air pollution in major urban areas including London.

We recognise and appreciate the action provided by Defra to date, but feel that significant action is now required if air quality in central London is going to meet the limit value for nitrogen dioxide within the next ten years. London has some of the highest levels of air pollution in the country, with the largest number of people exposed to that pollution. Preparing the Air Quality Plan is an opportunity to ensure compliance with the limit value as soon as possible.

Both the City of London Corporation and City of Westminster have been very active in implementing measures to improve local air quality and we would like to take this opportunity to remind you of our ongoing support in this important task.

You will be aware that the Mayor of London is implementing a range of measures and his plan for an Ultra Low Emission Zone will take us some way towards compliance by 2025. However, it is clear that we need additional policies to help



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people to move away from using diesel as a fuel when driving in busy urban areas. As such, we feel that the following would be helpful:

- A review of the current Vehicle Excise Duty classification, and other policies which encourage people to drive diesel cars rather than petrol.
- A greater understanding of why vehicle emissions in practice fall far short of the relevant Euro standard
- Financial support for the transition to zero emission capable vehicles, particularly taxis, in London.
- Financial support for low emission vehicle infrastructure in London.
- Support for policies to reduce the number of vehicles on the road.
- A review of the Clean Air Act to ensure it is fit for purpose for fuel and technology used today.
- A review of the Defra air quality grant system, which currently precludes many local authorities from applying for funding for local projects.
- Financial support for research and technology into low emission solutions.
- With London set to grow over the next few years, we need to ensure that this growth is taken into account in the Air Quality Plan. In particular the increased need for electricity and the move to generating more electricity in urban areas, which, if not managed correctly, could have a detrimental effect on local air quality.

We hope that you appreciate that we are committed to taking action to improve air quality in central London. We need your support to enable us to do this effectively and we would welcome a meeting.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Mead OBE
Chairman of the Port Health and
Environmental Services Committee

City of London Corporation

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Westminster City Council