



Department
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Mary Creagh MP
Chair
Environmental Audit Committee
House of Commons
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16th May 2019

Dear Mary,

**PUBLICATION OF GOVERNMENT'S 2018/19 PROGRESS REPORT TO PARLIAMENT
ON THE 25 YEAR ENVIRONMENT PLAN AND OUTCOME INDICATOR FRAMEWORK**

I am writing to let you know that today Defra publishes our first report on progress towards achieving the ambitions of the 25 Year Environment Plan.

The landmark 25 Year Plan is the keystone of our manifesto pledge to be the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than we inherited it. We have been making progress since the plan was published in January 2018 – delivering on our commitment to chart how we will improve our natural world as we leave the EU and take back control of our environmental legislation.

The government has made timely progress towards tackling some of our most significant environmental problems. Today's report indicates that 90% of the plan's actions are on track for delivery or have already been delivered.

Since publication of the plan we have also set out the legislation that will be key to a greener future after EU exit.

Our Agriculture Bill will implement a fair, sustainable system in which those who manage the land will be paid to protect and enhance the natural environment upon which we all depend. Our Fisheries Bill will mean that we can allocate quotas on the basis of what is scientifically sustainable, making sure we have a healthy marine environment and profitable fishing industry in the UK.

Our historic Environment Bill will put environmental ambition, and accountability at the heart of government. It will bring forward a range of measures, including on air quality and mandating net gain for biodiversity on new development in England – as set out in the Spring Statement. This will build on the draft Environment (Principles and Governance) Bill published in December 2018 which laid out our proposals for environmental governance after EU exit.



We will bring all existing EU environmental law into domestic law through the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 and secondary legislation made under it. And to ensure that the Act operates effectively we have made 13 affirmative and 15 negative Statutory Instruments – covering everything from waste, air quality, and water, to the protection of habitats and species.

Since publication we have set out our broader domestic vision and how we will realize it. Our Clean Air Strategy to cut air pollution is underpinned by new primary legislation, and our comprehensive Resources and Waste Strategy sets out steps towards a more circular economy.

On a global scale too, the UK will continue to set the pace in tackling catastrophic biodiversity loss alongside the twin challenge of climate change. Our Ivory Act will close our domestic markets and confirms the UK's leadership of international efforts to combat the illegal wildlife trade, and we have commissioned Prof Partha Dasgupta to conduct a review on the economics of biodiversity.

Yet there is much, much more to do. So we are ready to redouble our efforts in the face of an unprecedented pace of change and scale of challenge. That is why our report published today recognises that action across government must reflect the urgency of the climate emergency declared in the House alongside the resolve to make a permanent step change.

An indicator framework is also published today, alongside our progress report – a powerful new way to measure assess the evolving state of our natural world. The Natural Capital Committee will advise us on how this framework can help increase engagement with the environment through citizen science projects.

I am placing a copy of this letter, and copies of the 25 Year Environment Plan Progress report and outcome indicator framework in the Library of the House.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Environment Audit Committee for your diligent scrutiny of the forthcoming Environment Bill, and to welcome your views on our progress on the 25 Year Environment Plan so far.

With every good wish,



Michael Gove