



FROM LORD KATZ MBE
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24th November 2025

Dear Earl of Caithness

I am writing in response to the issues you raised during the recent debate on Thursday 30th October, regarding the Heather and Grass etc. Burning (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2025.

Air quality

You asked about the improvements that we are expecting in air quality with the new regulations. Large scale burning of vegetation, including heather, releases vast amounts of smoke into the air – often impacting local cities, towns and villages. Huge plumes can travel long distances impacting air quality across these communities. The smoke contains harmful pollutants like particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10). PM2.5 is the most harmful air pollutant for human health and reducing it is a key priority for the Government. The tiny particles can penetrate deeply into the human body, blood stream and major organs, and it is strongly associated with strokes, cardiovascular disease, asthma, and lung cancer.

Defra commissioned a scoping study to look at the emissions from the burning of moorland vegetation. The study estimated that this activity could contribute up to 4% of the current national total for fine particulate matter (PM2.5), making it a notable source.

Emissions from wildfires are included in our National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory and are estimated to produce around 0.3kt of PM2.5 annually. These are categorised as a natural source and therefore excluded from the national emissions total but, if included, they would account for around 0.8%, which is eight times less than the estimated contribution from moorland burning.

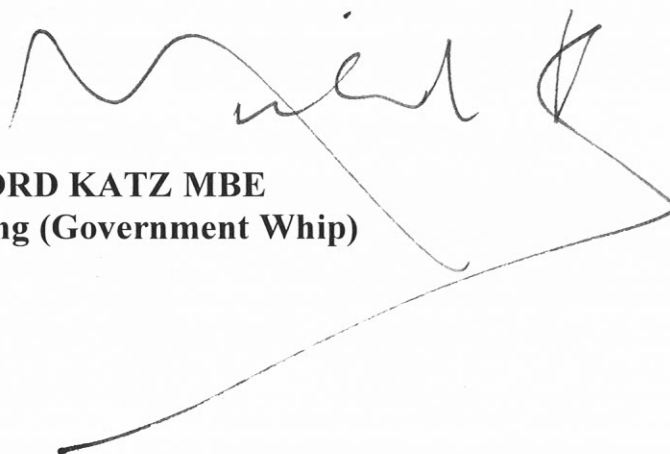
Consultation

You also raised the issue of the change of wording to the wildfire licensing grounds, from risk to impact, not being consulted on. Following the consultation, the Department realised that both the focus of our concerns and that of respondees was less the risk of a wildfire starting (i.e. ignitions) and more the risk of a bigger wildfire or the risk of wildfire spreading

further than could be helped. It became clear that more accurate language was needed when drafting the statutory instrument, as a court in the future might interpret 'risk of wildfire' as risk of any wildfires (i.e. ignitions occurring). Rather, 'impact' of wildfire was chosen as a succinct way to describe the intended meaning. It was considered a helpful change to landowners and managers, because, in reality, ignitions are outside their control and so no application could demonstrate a plan to reduce the risk of ignitions occurring. To be clear, there was no legal requirement to run a new consultation.

I hope you find this letter helpful. I will also send a copy to those Peers who spoke in the debate and place a copy in the House library.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Katz', with a large, sweeping flourish extending from the end of the signature across the bottom right of the page.

THE LORD KATZ MBE
Lord in Waiting (Government Whip)

The Earl of Caithness
House of Lords