



Department for Transport

Aoife O'Leary
Chief Executive Officer
Opportunity Green

From the Parliamentary
Under Secretary of State
Anthony Browne MP

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Dear Aoife,

Thank you for your emails on 5 March to the Secretaries of State for Transport, Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Business and Technology, and Energy, Security and Net Zero, enclosing a letter from seven environmental non-governmental organisations about the expansion of Emission Control Areas (ECAs) in UK waters. I am replying as the Minister for Decarbonisation, Aviation and Technology in the Department for Transport.

I'd like to take the opportunity to thank you for your response to our call for evidence on an expansion of the Emission Control Areas (ECAs) in UK coastal waters. The information gathered in this call for evidence will support the development of future policy making.

As you have noted in your letter, the maritime sector accounts for a large proportion of the NO_x, SO₂ and PM_{2.5}, and it is vital that we continue to reduce these emissions given the negative impacts that these pollutants have on our health. I expect ECAs to play a key role in this and, following our analysis of the responses to the call for evidence, the Department will share more details on how we will address these pollutants.

As well as looking domestically, we are assessing where international cooperation can be achieved. Through the International Maritime Organization (IMO), we are regularly working with other like-minded countries to explore where ECAs can be extended to go beyond UK waters into both international waters and the waters of neighbouring countries. As well as working to reduce air pollutants, I welcome the 2023 Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Strategy adopted by the IMO in July of this year.

The IMO will be hosting the 81st session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee, where again we will be working with like-minded countries to reduce the environmental impacts of international shipping. I firmly believe that the IMO is best placed to act on shipping emissions, both GHG emissions and wider environmental pollutants.

If progress does not meet requirements, then I will assess what policies would be appropriate to tackle the UK's share of shipping emissions.

While the UK and high ambition allies pursue more stringent goals, I recognise the value of consensus to continue making progress in this area and keep open the option of Paris compliance. By achieving unanimous support for the 2023 Strategy, all IMO Member States have agreed to work towards the development and adoption of robust economic and technical policy measures that can reduce shipping emissions. The agreement sends a clear message that the global maritime sector can see international shipping emissions reach net zero by 2050. The 2023 Strategy was agreed following intense negotiations, with a wide range of views represented in the room and we are proud that IMO Member States unanimously supported this new Strategy.

As we develop our policies to decarbonise and reduce the pollutants caused by shipping, I would encourage you to engage with my officials and provide any further evidence you may have which may support policy development.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony Browne". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

ANTHONY BROWNE MP

MINISTER FOR DECARBONISATION, AVIATION AND TECHNOLOGY