



Prime Minister ²

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My ref:

Your ref:

The Rt Hon John Wakeham MP
Lord President of the Council
Privy Council Office
Whitehall
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22 November 1988

Dear Lord President,

Public expectations about the Government's intention to introduce a Green Bill are running very high. Particularly since the Prime Minister's speech to the Royal Society on 29 September, a Green Bill has been seen as something of a touchstone of the Government's commitment to environmental protection.

I am constantly pressed on the point in media interviews. The answers I have given (consistent with not anticipating next year's Queen's Speech) seem evasive to many and are readily exploited by those who are ill-disposed to us. The viewers of Panorama and the readers of the "Northern Echo", to give two recent examples, do not make allowances for the convention of not anticipating the Queen's Speech, nor for our timetable within Government for collectively deciding on the content of future legislative programmes. The public can be persuaded that my failure to make the commitment is a failure of will.

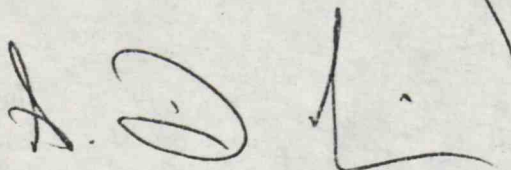
This situation will become more acute following the Queen's Speech and I think that we shall needlessly lose credibility and much of the presentational benefit that we have had from the Royal Society speech, unless we are more forthcoming than I have been able to be so far. As you may have gathered, I intend next month to put forward as my priority bid for the 1989/90 programme a proposal for an environment Bill of between 60-100 Clauses, (depending on content). Its central provisions would be the reform of the law on waste disposal; the reform of the law on the control of industrial pollution ("Integrated Pollution Control"); and the reform of the law on air pollution.

I hope that you and colleagues would agree that there would be great presentational advantage for the Government as a whole if we could anticipate somewhat our collective discussions on the 1989/90 legislative programme. I would like us to be able to say from now on that the Government is firmly committed to introduce a Green Bill at the earliest opportunity and that, subject to the

Queen's Speech, our intention is that this should be in the 1989/90 Session. Such a signal of our intentions would enable us to retain - indeed enhance - our credibility on the environment.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Members of QL and Sir Robin Butler.

Yours sincerely



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NICHOLAS RIDLEY

(Approved by the Secretary of State and signed in his absence)

PM 89
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