



Michael Fabricant MP

House of Commons  
Westminster  
London  
SW1A 0AA

27 November, 2020

Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP  
Chancellor of the Exchequer  
HM Treasury  
1 Horse Guards Road  
London SW1A 2HQ

*Dear Rishi,*

### **Our Waterways and Net Zero**

I am writing to you in my capacity as Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the Waterways. The APPG considers matters relating to navigable (and formerly navigable) rivers, canals, estuaries and lakes in the UK. It also looks into the social, economic and cultural impact of the regeneration of those waterways and extension of the system.

Our most recent meeting investigated the future of the waterways, with a particular focus on how the national network of canals and rivers can make a positive contribution to sustainable transport and meeting our commitment to Net Zero.

Based on contributions from senior industry and academic representatives, including the Inland Waterways Association, we have identified three key recommendations for you to consider as part of future investment in this vital element of the transport network:

- With recent developments in electric and battery technology increasingly being looked at for riverboats, local authorities such as Oxfordshire County Council are actively developing plans for a system of electric charging points on the more extensively-used parts of the canal network. We are therefore recommending the introduction of investment in a waterways electric charging network.
- To encourage the upgrading of the existing fleet of craft, we propose the introduction of a boat engine scrappage scheme based on those for road vehicles. In order to ensure that both residential and pleasure craft users are eligible, it is important that any grants for such a programme should be administered using navigation authority boat licence or registration numbers, rather than postcodes.
- The current proposals by HMRC and HM Treasury to move from red diesel to white for inland waterways craft is seen as being short-sighted in the context of moving towards zero carbon by 2050. Instead, we call for further reforms to fuel duty by moving towards support for biodiesels and other synthetic fuels

from the Member of Parliament for the Constituency of Lichfield

including the City of Lichfield, Abbots Bromley, Alrewas, Armitage, Burntwood, Chase Terrace, Chasetown, Colton, Fradley, Hammerwich, Handsacre, Kings Bromley, Longdon, the Ridwares, Streechay, Whittington, and Yoxall.  
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Despite COVID-19 placing extraordinary pressures on the national finances, as you noted in the recent Spending Review, it is clear that the Government is serious in ensuring that we meet our Net Zero ambitions.

Our canals and rivers were the foundation for the Industrial Revolution, transporting coal, iron and cotton across the country. Now, over two centuries later, they can play a vital role in meeting the ambitions of the Green Industrial Revolution the Prime Minister articulated earlier this year.

I do hope that you will take the measures outlined above into account as part of your plans ahead of your next Budget.

All the best!

Yours ever,  
Michael