



Environmental Audit Committee

Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London SW1P 4DR

12 February 2025

Sent by email only

Government Response to the Seventh Report from the Environmental Audit Committee, Session 2023–24, on Net zero and UK shipping

Dear Secretary of State –

Thank you for your letter of 28 January to which you attached the Government response to the Committee’s Seventh Report of Session 2023–24, on Net zero and UK shipping. The Committee considered the response at its meeting on 5 February and agreed that it would publish the response on 13 February, alongside this letter.

While the Committee was generally pleased to note the positive tone of the response to our predecessors’ recommendations, Members were concerned to note that no firm date has yet been set for the publication of the revised Clean Maritime Plan which was first expected in 2022.

Members were also alarmed that the Government had declined to confirm the future arrangements within your Department for the delivery of Government policy on net zero shipping, meaning that the continuation of initiatives under the UK SHORE programme after March 2025 is not guaranteed and that the UK’s net zero maritime programme will be dependent on decisions to be made in the forthcoming Spending Review. Our predecessors noted that the £206 million committed to net zero shipping initiatives in the current spending review period had been far outstripped by the £975 million committed to the Aviation Technology Institute in November 2023, for the period from 2026 to 2030—a financial commitment apparently not subject to spending review constraints.

The Committee noted with approval the leadership role played by the Government in net zero shipping at the United Nations and in the International Maritime Organization. It is essential to global efforts to limit international shipping emissions that effective regulatory measures to implement the IMO's 2023 Strategy on Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships are adopted in the IMO this year, for implementation by IMO Member States as soon as possible, so as to pave the way for a more ambitious GHG strategy in 2028. The UK will be expected to be in the lead in these IMO negotiations: its hand is unlikely to be strengthened by delays in bringing forward a renewed national plan for net zero shipping, or by delays in agreeing future funding and support for a long-term strategy.

In your response to this letter I would be grateful if you would set out the date by which the refreshed Clean Maritime Plan is expected to be published, together with the Government's explanation of the apparent disparity between levels of, and guarantees for, funding for decarbonisation of the UK's aviation and shipping industries.

The Committee notes the Government's intention to issue a delivery plan for the Sixth Carbon Budget at the time that the outcome of the 2025 Spending Review is announced. Can you confirm that this delivery plan will set an ambitious pathway to decarbonisation for the UK maritime sector?

The Committee also expects to examine the proposals for shipping decarbonisation to be made by the Climate Change Committee in its advice to Government for the Seventh Carbon Budget during the course of the current session of Parliament.

It would be helpful to the Committee to receive a response to the points raised in this letter not later than Thursday 27 February. In view of the public interest in this issue the Committee is publishing this letter on its website: I expect the Committee will also wish to publish any response.

Copies of this letter go to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Chair of the Transport Committee and the Chair of the Treasury Committee.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Toby Perkins', written in a cursive style.

Mr Toby Perkins MP
Chair, Environmental Audit Committee