



Environmental Audit Committee

Rt Hon Steve Reed OBE MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Sent by email only

16 April 2025

Dear Secretary of State,

Thank you for your letter of 3 April addressed to the Chairs of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee and the Environmental Audit Committee concerning the recruitment of a Chair for the Environment Agency. The Environmental Audit Committee considered the letter at its meeting on 7 April.

Members appreciated the opportunity to review the role description and essential criteria which you are seeking in candidates. In particular they noted your wish to attract candidates with “a strong dedication to aligning the Environment Agency’s environmental goals with the broader government growth mission, driven by a genuine interest in protecting and improving the environment and supporting sustainable development” (criterion 1) and “a commercial mindset [and] an understanding of regulation and how it can support sustainable economic growth” (criterion 5).

It will not surprise you to learn that Committee members, during the pre-appointment hearing with the Government’s preferred candidate, are likely to seek to establish the candidate’s commitment both to the Agency’s current priority “to protect and improve water, land and biodiversity”, and to the delivery of the environmental targets set by Ministers.

Members noted your intention to form a search committee “to review the emerging candidate field to ensure it is sufficiently diverse and high-quality”. I should be grateful if you would provide the Committee with details of the members (a) of the search committee, when it is formed, and (b) of the advisory assessment panel which is to review applications, shortlist and interview candidates and make recommendations to you on any appointment.

It would be helpful to the Committee to receive details of the composition of the search committee and of the advisory assessment panel not later than **Thursday 24 April**.

Given the public interest in this appointment the Committee has decided to publish the correspondence on its website.

A copy of this letter goes to the Chair of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee and the Chair of the House of Lords Environment and Climate Change Committee.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Toby Perkins'.

Mr Toby Perkins MP
Chair, Environmental Audit Committee