Dear MP,

I am writing to you as your constituent and as a member of local environmental group [Zero West](https://zerowest.org/) who are campaigning to accelerate the transition to a zero carbon West of England, to express deep concerns about the government’s proposed flagship Environment Bill.

MPs have already stated that it falls ‘woefully short’ in protecting the UK’s air quality post-Brexit.

[In its pre-legislative scrutiny of the bill](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmenvaud/1951/195102.htm), the Environmental Audit Committee (EAC) criticised the document, which sets out the government’s plans to protect the UK’s environment after the country has left the EU.

The House of Commons committee has expressed ‘serious’ reservations about the draft Bill, saying that it ‘lacks coherence’ and is set to leave many government departments unaccountable when it comes to hitting environmental targets.

Mary Creagh MP, chair of the Environmental Audit Committee, said: ‘If we want to be a world-leader in environmental protection, we need a world-leading body to protect it.

‘The Government promised to create a new body for governance that would go beyond standards set by the European Union. The Bill, so far, falls woefully short of this.

Reviewing the principles and governance of the draft Bill, MPs have expressed concerns that its proposals ‘severely downgrade’ the environmental principles used to guide EU law and policy.

One example given of principles lacking from the Bill is the presumption that environmental protections will not be reduced after the UK leaves the EU, as it sets no legal requirements for public bodies to maintain current standards.

The EAC also found that the government ignored its recommendation to make its new Office of Environmental Protection (OEP) accountable to parliament, as the Bill failed to make clear just how independent the new watchdog body would be.

The committee also highlighted the government’s decision to exclude greenhouse gas emissions from the Bill’s definition of environmental law, leaving the OEP with no power to force central, local and public government bodies to mitigate climate change.

Creagh added: ‘Far from creating a body which is independent, free to criticise the government and hold it to account, this Bill would reduce action to meet environmental standards to a tick-box exercise, limit scrutiny, and pass the buck for environmental failings to local authorities.

‘It’s shocking that enforcement to act on climate change has been deliberately left out of the remit of the OEP.

‘The draft Bill means that if we leave the EU we will have weaker environmental principles, less monitoring and weaker enforcement, and no threat of fines to force government action.’

The EAC has urged the government to put a high level of environmental protection as an ‘overarching guiding objective’ of the bill, and make the OEP accountable to parliament.

The committee has also asked for the OEP to be given equivalent powers to those of the European Commission when it comes to enforcing environmental standards.

The government’s full Environment Bill – which will cover air quality, nature conservation and waste management – is set to be introduced later this year.

I am asking you to express your concerns about the current form of the draft bill and to contact the Environment Minister asking for the bill to meet the following list of requirements:

The Environment Bill:

* Must set standards that are equal to or exceed protections set by the EU
* Must include requirements to meet UK climate change targets
* Must apply to all government departments
* The proposed Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) must have significant powers to enforce non compliance and must be fully independent from government.

Please can you let me know how and when you intend to raise these concerns with Environment Minister, Michael Gove MP

Thank you

Yours sincerely

Email:

Telephone:

Website: <https://zerowest.org/>