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1 November 2011

Dear colleague,

Consultation on future engagement arrangements for EPACs and RLFACs

I am pleased to launch this consultation detailing proposals, subject to passage of the Public Bodies Bill, on future arrangements for the role of Environment Agency's statutory Environment Protection Advisory Committees (EPACs) and Regional and Local Fisheries Advisory Committees (RLFACs) in England.

The Committees have provided a valuable service since they were established in the Environment Act 1995. Environmental challenges and opportunities evolve and it is important that the approaches we have to engage with and address them are flexible, innovative and local. Sixteen years on from the Environment Act it is important that we revisit these arrangements and look at the future engagement framework we need to best deliver outcomes for the environment.

I am writing to invite your views and comments on the proposals detailed in this consultation. The current committee Chairs and members have helped to develop these proposals in discussion with their local stakeholders. I would like to take the opportunity to thank all those that have contributed thus far.

Views are being sought on:

1. If you agree with the principle of abolition of the Environment Agency's statutory Environment Protection Advisory Committees and Regional and Local Fisheries Advisory Committees and the establishment of flexible non-statutory arrangements?
2. If you agree with the proposed high level principles against which to design future stakeholder engagement? Do you think there are there any gaps?
3. If you support the more flexible and region specific approaches being developed to allow more engagement at the local level (Appendix D)? Do you think there any gaps?

You will find the following documents on Defra's website: www.defra.gov.uk/consult/

- A copy of this letter
- The consultation document

- Annexes to the consultation document
- A list of consultees

If you wish to obtain a copy of this consultation, please contact:

Environment Agency Sponsorship Team
Defra
Area 2D
Ergon House
Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 2AL

Tel: 020 7238 4399 / 4608

Email: eas@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Responses

Please send responses to either:

Environment Agency Sponsorship Team
Defra
Area 2D
Ergon House
Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 2AL

Or email: eas@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Responses should be received by **Monday 23 January 2012**.

Consultation Criteria

This consultation complies with HM Government's Code of Practice on Consultation which can be found at: <http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/better-regulation/consultation-guidance>

When this consultation ends, we intend to put a copy of the responses in the Defra library at Ergon House, London. This is so that the public can see them. Also, members of the public may ask for a copy of responses under freedom of information legislation.

If you do not want your response - including your name, contact details and any other personal information – to be publicly available, please say so clearly in writing when you send your response to the consultation. Please note, if your computer automatically includes a confidentiality disclaimer, that won't count as a confidentiality request.

Please explain why you need to keep details confidential. We will take your reasons into account if someone asks for this information under freedom of information legislation. But, because of the law, we cannot promise that we will always be able to keep those details confidential.

We will summarise all responses and place this summary on our website at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/default.asp>.

This summary will include a list of names of organisations that responded but not people's personal names, addresses or other contact details.

To see consultation responses and summaries, please contact the library at:

Defra
Information Resource Centre
Lower Ground Floor
Ergon House
17 Smith Square
London
SW1P 3JR
Telephone: 020 7238 6575
Email: defra.library@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Please give the library 24 hours' notice. There is a charge for photocopying and postage.

If you have any comments or complaints about the consultation process, please address them to Defra's Consultation Co-ordinator, Area 7C Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR, or email consultation.coordinator@defra.gsi.gov.uk.

Yours faithfully,



Steven Gleave
Head of Environment Agency Sponsorship
Defra