

PRESS RELEASE

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CANAL & RIVER TRUST **RESPONDS TO GOVERNMENT'S CLEAN AIR STRATEGY CONSULTATION**

The Canal & River Trust has urged Government to consider the needs of boaters and put financial support into the development of new, cleaner technology for the waterway sector in its response to the Government's draft Clean Air Strategy.

The charity is supportive of the Government's proposed measures to improve air quality and believes the waterways have a role to play in combatting pollution and providing clean air spaces, as well as helping reduce transport pollution by moving journeys off road.

However in recognising that the inland waterways make a very small but sometimes locally significant contribution to air pollution – namely through boat dependence on solid fuel burning stoves and diesel engines – the Trust is arguing for a coherent Government-supported approach, including investment in alternative technologies, to help address these issues and incentivise change.

The Trust wants to work with Government and local authorities on a sector-wide plan to develop solutions for reducing the impact from power and heating on boats while encouraging the uptake of reduced-emissions technology. This would need to take into account the current difficulties boat owners face in making changes to engines and heating methods, particularly when the boat is someone's home.

Peter Birch, national environment policy advisor at the Canal & River Trust said: "Our waterways offer a respite for many people, especially when they run through urban areas that lack other green and blue spaces. We believe they have a vital role to play in improving wellbeing and can contribute to the reduction of air pollution. We're committed to working with others to create opportunities for improvement by diverting journeys off road and changing public behaviour.

"Boats on our canals and rivers only make a small contribution to emissions nationally but there can be localised problems. We are working in partnership with local authorities and boaters to address these specific areas but would welcome additional investment in innovation and

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implementation for alternative technologies to help address these issues. Many boaters are already very environmentally conscious but are hampered by a lack of 'green' alternatives to diesel engines and wood-burning stoves.

“While we agree that vessels cannot remain exempt and must play their part in the battle to improve air quality, it is essential that the needs of boaters are accounted for when drafting any new legislation.”

The Government's Clean Air Strategy can be read here:

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/environmental-quality/clean-air-strategy-consultation/>

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Notes to Editors

The Canal & River Trust cares for and brings to life 2,000 miles of canals and rivers across England & Wales. We believe waterways have the power to make a difference to people's lives and that spending time by water can make us all healthier and happier. By bringing communities together to make a difference to their local waterway, we are creating places and spaces that can be used and enjoyed by everyone, every day.

www.canalrivertrust.org.uk