Petition P-05-839 - Adopt WHO guidelines for air pollution into Welsh law and introduce a Clean Air Act for Wales

20 September 2019

Dear Janet Finch-Saunders AM,

I write to ask you to consider this petition again at your earliest convenience. The petition was last considered in the meeting 29 January 2019; and at this meeting the Members decided to wait for the publication of a draft Clean Air Plan before reviewing whether any further action could be taken.

We write again to ask this petition to be considered for the following reasons:

1 – The draft Clean Air Plan has yet to be published. In a statement in April 2018 the then Minister for Environment Hannah Blythyn indicated the Clean Air Plan should be published by the end of 2018[1]. We are very concerned at the delay to its publication.

2 – First Minister Mark Drakeford's manifesto for his election included a commitment to introducing a Clean Air Act. In the final legislative statement of this Assembly in July 2019, there was no Bill bringing forward a Clean Air Act.

3 – The previous UK Government Environment Secretary announced in July that the UK Environment Bill should include "a legally binding commitment on particulate matter so that no part of the country exceeds the levels recommended by the WHO."[2]

4 – Despite the declaration of a Climate Emergency earlier this year by Welsh Government, there has been little action taken by the Government that will combat high levels of air pollution.

Almost eight months after the petition was last considered, we would ask that the lack of detail on this important policy area is assessed, and the immediate need for the WHO guidelines to be enshrined in Welsh law is reviewed by this committee.

Emma Henwood
Policy and Public Affairs Manager
BHF Cymru

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[1] Hannah Blythyn, Record of Proceedings, 24 April 2018
[2] Michael Gove, 16 July 2019, quoted on Air Quality News, https://airqualitynews.com/2019/07/16/who-limits-for-particulate-matter-will-be-enshrined-in-uk-law-pledges-gove/, accessed 20 September 2019