

Greens call on Defra to improve air pollution alerts



23 January 2017

Jenny Jones, Green member of the House of Lords, has responded to the latest air pollution episode which saw some areas of the country hit Defra's highest warning level [1].

The London Mayor issued a health warning to millions of Londoners – but the government continues to do nothing to alert people except tweet from its specialist @DefraUKAir account.

The official Defra alert page says that there are no alerts at this time, despite pollution being high or very high in the south and east of the country.

Jenny Jones said:

“The Mayor of London clearly cares about the health impacts of bad air on people living and working in the capital, but this government is letting everyone else suffer without any warning what's so ever. When air pollution episodes are capable of triggering an extra 300 deaths as well as hundreds of emergency admissions to hospitals around the country, I think that we have to consider emergency measures to discourage driving, encourage a switch away from diesel and promote less polluting alternatives.

“The government's sole aim is to downplay the whole thing. No press release. It doesn't even make the main DEFRA twitter feed, or use the NHS to reach out to vulnerable people. They want to tick the smallest of boxes by putting out the minimum of information. It is then up to those who are vulnerable to respiratory diseases and heart conditions to find that information. It is criminal neglect by a government that has lost two court cases over its inadequate plans.”

Notes:

1. <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/latest/>

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Green Party: Government is ignoring climate change warning signs



23 January 2017

The Green Party has responded to the revelation the Government tried to bury its own climate change report [1]. The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment Report warns of significant risk to food supplies, deaths during heatwaves doubling and infrastructure damage due to flooding.

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

“It’s astounding the Government appears to have tried to bury its own climate change report. Climate change is the single biggest threat we face. The effects predicted by the report aren’t minor inconveniences – people’s lives are in danger. It’s hugely alarming the Government is sweeping its own warnings under the rug and failing to provide leadership.

“The report was quietly published on January 18, the exact same day experts confirmed 2016 was the hottest year on record [2]. The evidence is overwhelming and the Government should be responding to this report and tackling climate change head on by backing a renewable energy revolution. There is simply no excuse for inaction.”

Notes:

1.
<http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/climate-change-risk-assessment-global-warming-government-accused-burying-report-a7540726.html>
2.
<https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2017/01/18/green-party-time-to-stop-breaking-records-and-start-making-change/>

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Parliament deserves full disclosure on missile test, says Caroline Lucas



23 January 2017

*** Lucas demands that the Prime Minister comes to the House of Commons to give details on missile test**

Caroline Lucas, the Green Party co-leader and Chair of Parliamentary CND, is calling for 'full disclosure' of the details of testing 'failure' of a Trident missile.

Lucas – whose party opposes the renewal of the Trident – is demanding that the Prime Minister herself comes to the House of Commons today to give MPs further details of what happened in the missile test.

She said:

"These hugely expensive missile test rarely happen, so any single failure must be taken extremely seriously. Being in charge of our nuclear arsenal is one of the most crucial jobs of the Prime Minister, which is why Theresa May herself should come to the House of Commons today to give MPs details of what happened last June. Nothing short of full disclosure on this matter is acceptable.

"A missile veering off course is deeply concerning. Imagine such a failure occurring in a 'real world' situation – it could lead to the slaughter of millions of people in an ally's country. How can the Government possibly make an argument for a deterrent when the only recent test shows that the weapon cannot be relied upon?

"Replacing Trident is neither necessary nor sensible. Missile test failures only add to the overwhelming amount of evidence against Trident renewal. Rather than pouring billions into this cold war relic we should be providing our troops with the equipment they need to keep safe – and investing in real security measures for a country under strain like a fully-functioning NHS and a world-class social care system."

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