

## Clean Air for Brent

A coalition of residents' associations and environmental groups

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The Rt Hon Theresa May MP  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street, SW1 2AA

Dear Prime Minister

### **The scandal of diesel emissions: action is needed**

As you will be well aware air pollution in the form of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and particulates (PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>) are considered to be causing over 40,000 premature deaths a year in the UK from cancer, heart and lung diseases and strokes (King's College, London 2015). In addition there are unquantified numbers of people whose conditions are worsened for the same reason. Children in heavily polluted areas may suffer up to 10% reduced lung growth.

This is a public health scandal. It results from a policy error in which many were complicit. It is not the fault of drivers of diesel vehicles. It now hugely outstrips the number of people killed or injured in road traffic accidents, currently 1,800 annually. The majority of our fellow citizens do not yet appreciate this, though if they understood we are sure they would want action.

For the last two years we as separate groups of NW London residents have been working to understand the problem and to raise awareness of the actions needed to combat it. We have all put our own money into voluntary but expertly analysed monitoring exercises on heavily trafficked roads and elsewhere for comparison. From these and other studies, including those financed by the Mayors of London, we are convinced that **diesel vehicles of all kinds, especially buses, are the major contributor to the problem.**

We have now decided to come together to take more action locally while at the same time calling for policy change at the national level. Leadership is urgently needed.

We are therefore calling on you and your Environment Secretary, Andrea Leadsom, to send out some very clear signals to all concerned in the announcement expected before the end of this month.

We propose that priority measures include the following:

- A road tax structure in the next budget which discourages purchase of new diesel vehicles;

- Speeding up the removal of older diesel vehicles from our roads via a scrappage scheme, possibly on lines proposed by the present Mayor of London;
- Support for more rapid conversion of the bus and coach fleet to hybrid or zero emission vehicles where feasible and to Euro VI where not;
- Taxing diesel fuel at a higher rate than petrol;
- Placing a duty on all local highway authorities to operate schemes which dis-incentivise use of diesel vehicles by zone or time (eg during school runs);
- Ensuring that, whether our future vehicle approval systems are aligned with the EU or not, motor manufacturers have to comply with rigorous and independently applied standards.

We look forward to hearing from you and your Government. Lives are at stake.

We are sending this letter to our Brent MPs, asking them to endorse it and forward it to you and to Mrs Leadsom, if they agree with it, to the Mayor of London, Navin Shah, AM and to Brent councillors.

Yours sincerely

Robin Sharp CB  
On behalf of Clean Air for Brent