



The Boating Association The Boating Association

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Serving Boaters Everywhere

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The Right Honourable David Miliband,  
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
DEFRA,  
Nobel House,  
17 Smith Square  
London.  
SW1P 3JR

3<sup>rd</sup> November 2006.

Dear Sir,

## **DEFRA Reduction of funding to British Waterways**

I am astonished and dismayed to find that because of DEFRA's inefficiency and mistakes DEFRA has seen fit to reduce funding to British Waterways by such a significant amount. BW has already indicated that your action has caused the need for staff redundancies and will give considerable added costs to their stake holders. This is not acceptable. As Chairman of The Boating Association representing the interests of boaters Nationwide and therefore major BW stake holders I protest most vigorously on their behalf and ask that you reconsider your misguided action for the following reasons.

- It is morally and commercially wrong to penalise a business which has been performing well, meeting budgets and is achieving a planned cost cutting exercise already built into its business plan. This is particularly so as the penalty is caused through the mistakes, inefficiencies and misconduct of other departments.
- It would appear, apart from British Waterways, most of your departments are cost centres contributing little or nothing to government income. It would therefore appear crass or at the least extremely misguided to penalise and potentially damage a profit centre which currently contributes to government income, having a medium and long term capacity to contribute even more if not damaged now. The income currently being achieved directly or indirectly through secondary income from waterway businesses and users via VAT, business rates, taxes etc.
- Many boaters are retired and on fixed income I am one or young families struggling to make ends meet. Boat licences after next year we are informed will increase by 10% for the foreseeable future because of your action. Fuel costs may also soon be significantly affected. On top of this and other recent and expected government and local authority increases it becomes intolerable and will inevitably drive many boaters off the waterways. It is predominantly boaters who attract visitors to the waterways.
- Many waterside businesses are already struggling and many have closed. Yours actions will cause those boaters who do remain on the waterways to spend less. This will compound the problems causing more businesses to fail resulting in even less government income through the loss of the various business taxes.

With the above in mind please withdraw your punitive actions. Take into consideration the people affected. TBA is a non political association; however boaters are your existing and or potential voters. If you continue with this course of action many will walk away from the current government at the next elections

Yours faithfully,

G. David Dunning  
TBA Chairman