



The Rt Hon George Eustice MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

5 August 2021

Dear Secretary of State,

We are writing to you as the recognised trade unions representing Environment Agency staff. We are drawing to your attention that these workers have been offered only a £250 or 0% consolidated increase in this year's pay offer, due to the implementation of the UK Government's stated pay policy position for public sector workers announced earlier in 2021.

With inflation at 3.9%, this amounts to a significant pay cut. They are not well-paid, so it is indefensible that they should now be offered a further real terms pay cut, that is cumulatively running at over 20% since 2010. It is an even bigger blow when colleagues working for the Scottish Environment Protection Agency have been awarded a consolidated increase.

Our Environment Agency workers keep communities safe, and many deal with increasing numbers of environmental incidents throughout the year as a result of climate change. Specifically major flooding incidents over the last 20 months, including Todbrook Reservoir, Storms Ciara and Dennis in February 2020, and Storms Bella (over Christmas 2020) and Christoph in January 2021. Both you and the Prime Minister, rightly praised staff in their response to these incidents.

Just like our NHS workers and those in local government, Environment Agency staff have continued working in roles protecting our environment and have put themselves in harm's way to fight COVID-19 and to keep essential services going. They went to work, so that others could stay home.

We understand that the pandemic has led to a loss of income for the agency, and that ultimately this pay offer is the result of pay policy and funding decisions taken by central government. We are therefore writing to you to ask that you advocate for Environment Agency staff within government, and champion fair pay for these workers.

Environment Agency workers should be getting a fair pay rise. Not only because they deserve it, but because vital services are only resilient with a valued and fairly rewarded workforce.

Environment Agency workers should be getting a fair pay rise, whether they are working on the frontline in our field work teams; dealing with the public and other agencies during emergency incidents; enforcing legislation; dealing with

flood and drought management or any of the other roles Environment Agency colleagues undertake.

It will be a source of national embarrassment that with the UK Government hosting world leaders at COP26 in Glasgow later this year – you are failing to invest in the very staff who will play a key role in delivering UK Government policies to tackle climate change.

Such glaring inconsistencies can only serve to undermine the UK's stated ambition to be world leaders in tackling the climate emergency, and it will do significant damage to the ability of the government to meet its stated objective in the 25 Year Environment plan, of leaving the environment in a better state for the next generation.

We are therefore seeking a meeting with you at the earliest possible opportunity as well as seeking assurances from you that you will make the case within government for Environment Agency staff to receive the fair pay settlement they deserve.

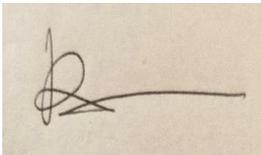
Yours sincerely



**Donna Rowe-Merriman,
Joint TU Secretary, UNISON**



**Kevin Warden
Prospect**



**Kevin Brandstatter
GMB**



**Caren Evans
Unite the union**