



January 2009

Parliamentary Briefing

Marine and Coastal Access Bill Amendment

Climate change duty on the MMO

The organisations listed above are closely engaged in the Marine and Coastal Access Bill. We are also members of Wildlife and Countryside Link's Marine Task Force¹, which has been campaigning for several years for improvements in marine conservation.

Background

The purpose of this amendment is to ensure that in exercising its functions, the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) has regard to the desirability of mitigating, and adapting to, climate change.

The organisations listed above believe that the Bill should take proper account of the environment and the role the MMO – the Government's primary delivery body in the marine area - can, and should, play in combating climate change.

As climate change grows in significance in planning decisions on land, so it should at sea. Our seas provide important services to us, including taking up significant quantities of carbon dioxide and regulating our climate. We require healthy marine ecosystems for this. Activities at sea could both contribute to carbon emissions and limit its ability to adapt to climate change. This Bill provides an opportunity to require the MMO to take this into account when making planning decisions.

Given the inclusion of such considerations in the Climate Change Act 2008 and the Planning Act 2008, we believe that the precedent has now been set for Government legislation to have regard to climate change considerations as a matter of course. Given the scope of the Marine and Coastal Access Bill, it is only natural that this Bill should also include a similar duty to consider the impact of climate change on our seas.

For further information please contact Danny Stone, Parliamentary Officer, RSPB, on 07989 502004 or danny.stone@rspb.org.uk, Eva Groeneveld, Public Affairs Officer, WWF-UK on 07766 150944 or egroeneveld@wwf.org.uk, or Hazel Phillips, Head of Public Affairs, The Wildlife Trusts on 020 7803 4293 or hphillips@wildlifetrusts.org

¹ Wildlife and Countryside Link is a coalition of the UK's major environmental organisations working together for the conservation and protection of wildlife, the countryside and the marine environment.

Annex – Amendments

Marine & Coastal Access Bill
House of Lords Committee Stage, January 2009

Clause	Clause 2 General objective
Amendment	Page 2, line 25: Insert '(4) The MMO must have due regard to the desirability of mitigating, and adapting to, climate change'