

National Bargee Travellers Association

Response to DEFRA Consultation on solid fuel burning - taking action to reduce fine particulate matter and smoke emissions

Introduction

This consultation response is from the National Bargee Travellers Association (NBTA). The NBTA is a volunteer organisation formed in 2009 that campaigns and provides advice and support for itinerant boat dwellers on Britain's inland and coastal waterways ("Bargee Travellers"). This includes anyone whose home is a boat and who does not have a permanent mooring for their boat with planning permission for residential use. The NBTA is the only national organisation in Britain dedicated to upholding and defending the rights of itinerant boat dwellers. The NBTA has members on all the major navigation authorities' waterways and beyond. The NBTA deals with at least 200 individual cases each year.

The navigable inland waterway system in Britain is home to an estimated 15,000 to 50,000 Bargee Travellers. There are as yet no accurate statistics for the number of people living on boats either with or without a permanent mooring in the UK. There are at least 21 inland navigation authorities in the UK. Canal & River Trust is the largest, with around 80% of the UK's inland waterways. Other significant navigation authorities are the Environment Agency; the Broads Authority; the Conservators of the River Cam; the Middle Level Commissioners; Peel Holdings (the Bridgewater Canal) and British Waterways Scotland (trading as Scottish Canals). An unknown number of Bargee Travellers live in coastal harbours and estuaries, some of which are controlled by harbour authorities.

Questions about you

1 Would you like your response to be confidential?

No

2 If you answered yes to this question, please give your reason(s)

3 What is your name?

Pamela Smith

4 What is your email address?

secretariat@bargee-traveller.org.uk

5 In which part of the United Kingdom are you based?

England

6 Which part of the UK are you primarily interested in?

All of the UK

7 Who are you responding as (select one option only)?

Non-Governmental Organisation

8 If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, what is its name?

National Bargee Travellers Association

New stove emission limits

9 Do you feel the proposed new emissions limit of 1g per hour (plus 0.1g per 0.3 kW of output) for stoves is appropriate?

No

**10 If no, please explain what you feel the emissions limit should be and why
What should the emission limit be (and why):**

There should not be a limit. Any limit risks causing disadvantage to people whose only source of heating, cooking or hot water is a solid fuel stove or open fire.

11 Do you have any comments on the impact (positive or negative) resulting from the proposed new standard? This could be in terms of air quality, human health, the economy or the stove industry, for example.

Your comments on the impact:

This would have a severe adverse impact on families, pensioners, and all other people who have no source of heating or cooking except for a solid fuel stove or open fire. There are at least 200,000 people in this situation. The 2021 Census counted 105,000 people who live in mobile accommodation such as caravans and boats. In addition there is a significant number of people living in rural areas who are not on the gas or electricity grid in addition to boat dwellers both with and without permanent moorings, caravan dwellers, and van dwellers. It would be unthinkable to remove their ability to heat their homes, cook food and heat water.

12 To what extent do you agree or disagree that a 3 – 5 year timescale for the new limits coming into force following new legislation is appropriate?

Neither agree nor disagree

13 If you disagree, please explain why and give your views on an alternative timeframe

Alternative timeframe views:

There should not be any new legislation that prevents people who have no alternative to a solid fuel stove or open fire from heating their homes, cooking food or heating water.

14 Do you have a view on which standard or regime could be used for a single testing regime for appliance emissions?

Testing regime for appliance emissions:

Sufficient testing for emissions already exists through the Smoke Control Areas.

15 To what extent do you agree or disagree that solid fuel appliances should be subject to periodic retesting after being on the market, to ensure continued compliance with air quality and efficiency standards?

Strongly disagree

16 If you put agree or strongly agree, how often do you think retesting should be carried out?

Not Answered

New mandatory labelling scheme for solid fuel appliances

17 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the introduction of a mandatory labelling scheme for solid fuel appliances?

Neither agree nor disagree

18 Please provide further detail to support your response

Labelling opinion :

19 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the example label above effectively communicates information about the air pollution emissions of a solid fuel appliance?

Neither agree nor disagree

20 Please provide further detail to support your response.

Further detail on air pollution information :

21 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the example label above effectively informs consumers about the fuels permitted for use in a given solid fuel appliance?

Neither agree nor disagree

22 Please provide further detail to support your response.

Detail on fuel information :

23 To what extent do you agree or disagree that health labelling should be mandatory on solid fuel appliances?

Neither agree nor disagree

24 Please provide any evidence you have to support your response.

Detail on health labelling:

25 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the example label above effectively conveys that there are health impacts of using solid fuels appliances to consumers?

Neither agree nor disagree

26 Please provide further detail to support your response.

Details on health impacts:

27 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the health statement “Please be aware that this appliance emits air pollution which can harm your health” is appropriate?

Disagree

28 If you disagree, please suggest an alternative health statement

Alternative health statement:

This could discourage some of the 200,000 or so people who have no other source of space heating, water heating or cooking from using the only viable appliance they have, with detrimental effects.

29 Are there any additional elements or considerations which you think should be included in the labelling specification or design?

Yes

30 If yes, what considerations you think should be included in the labelling specification or design?

Labelling considerations:

Considerations for the 200,000 or so people who have no other source of space heating, hot water or cooking.

31 Do you agree or disagree that Trading Standards should be the enforcing body for the proposed labelling requirements?

Disagree

32 If disagree, please provide further detail to support your response.

Trading standards alternative:

There should not be any enforcement in this matter.

33 To what extent do you agree or disagree that a range of penalties between £300-£2000 should be used for breaches of the proposed new labelling requirements?

Strongly disagree

34 If you disagree, please provide alternative options

Penalties alternative:

The proposed labelling requirements do not take account of the needs of people who have no other source of heating, cooking or hot water apart from a solid fuel stove.

35 To what extent do you agree or disagree that an increased penalty within the proposed range of £300-£2000 for repeat offenders should be introduced to deter continued non-compliance?

Strongly disagree

36 Please provide further detail to support your response

Detail on repeat offenders:

People should not be penalised for having no other source of heating, cooking or hot water than a solid fuel stove.

37 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the enforcing body should be able to enter a premises at a reasonable time, inspect goods and require persons to provide information?

Strongly disagree

38 Please provide further detail to support your response.

Enforcing body entering premises:

If the premises entered was a boat, caravan or other mobile or fixed structure that was used as a home, this would be a violation of the rights to respect for one's home under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). People should not be penalised for having no other source of heating, cooking or hot water than a solid fuel stove.

39 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the enforcement authority should be allowed to charge persons the costs incurred in performing their functions?

Strongly disagree

40 Please provide further detail to support your response.

Charging for enforcement:

People should not be penalised for having no other source of heating, cooking or hot water than a solid fuel stove.

Mandatory health labelling for fuels

41 To what extent do you agree or disagree that health labelling should be mandatory on solid fuel packaging?

Neither agree nor disagree

42 Please provide any evidence you have to support your response.

Views on mandatory health labelling:

43 Are there any additional elements or considerations which you think should be included in the labelling specification or design?

No

44 If yes, please provide details of the other elements or considerations you think should be included in the labelling specification or design

Additional elements :

45 Which of the following health statements do you prefer?

Not Answered

46 Please give a reason for your choice

Reason for label option:

None of the above. People should not be penalised for having no other source of heating, cooking or hot water than a solid fuel stove.

47 If you would prefer an alternative health statement, please provide this and give your reasoning

Alternative statement:

People should not be penalised for having no other source of heating, cooking or hot water than a solid fuel stove.

Increasing enforcement penalties for non-compliance with The Domestic Solid Fuels Regulations in England

48 To what extent do you agree that increasing the fixed penalty notice for suppliers under the Domestic Solid Fuels Regulations would deter non-compliance?

Strongly disagree

49 What do you think the cost of a fixed penalty notice should be for suppliers breaching the Domestic Solid Fuels Regulations?

Not Answered

50 To what extent do you agree that an increased penalty for repeat offenders should be introduced to deter continued non-compliance?

Strongly disagree

51 Please provide further detail to support your response.

Detail on repeat offender penalties:

People should not be penalised for having no other source of heating, cooking or hot water than a solid fuel stove.

Additional evidence

52 Do you have any additional evidence, data, or relevant information that should be considered by Defra to inform the development of these policies?

Additional evidence:

People should not be penalised for having no other source of heating, cooking or hot water than a solid fuel stove or open fire. There has been no consideration of this population, numbering at least 200,000, in this consultation. This is a serious omission and DEFRA should address it thoroughly, including consulting as soon as possible with the

communities, such as boat dwellers, who are directly affected, before making any further legislation or regulations.

National Bargee Travellers Association
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