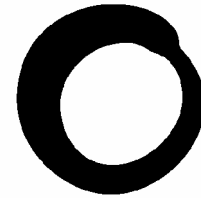




Marine Information Network
www.marinet.org.uk

Mike King
79 California Avenue,
Scratby, Great Yarmouth,
Norfolk.
m.king.insp.safety@totalise.co.uk



**Friends of
the Earth**

Mr. Phill Woolas MP – Minister for the Environment
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London
SW1A 3JR

79 California Avenue
Scratby
Great Yarmouth
Norfolk
NR29 3NS

Our Ref. MJK/M/PW/1

3rd. April 2008

Government Policy for Provision of Sea Defences

Dear Sir

During a recent local live web link question and answer session with your new minister responsible for climate, biodiversity and waste Joan Ruddock she constructively stated that she would forward my question on the above subject to you.

– Question and reply enclosed.

The proposal in the recent report by Natural England to allow a vast area of Norfolk (6,500 hectares) from Eccles-on-sea to Winterton-on-sea and as far inland as Stalham to be flooded by the sea, makes my questions on this subject much more urgent.

How can Natural England an organisation that is supposed to care for our environment and the unique wildlife in this area propose such destruction, are they acting on their own initiative or are they following government guide lines?

The government sea defences (applicably named) guidance document “Making Space for Water” laid out the government’s defeatist policy that we must accept the destruction of present defences and erosion losses to our coastline and make space for water.

This was followed by the pilot study Kelling to Lowestoft Ness Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) 3b which put this guidance into practice with policies of “No Active Intervention” (do nothing) for 50% of its unit areas and “Managed Retreat” for many others.

When this SMP was circulated for public consultation during 2006 there were more than 2,400 responses and only 10 of these responses found this plan acceptable – but the Anglian Coastal Authorities responsible were still pressured to implement it against public opinion.

The UK is one of the richest and most technically advanced nations in the world but it has a relatively small land mass compared to its population size which has now rapidly increased to an all-time high of 60,000,000 plus.

This ever increasing population has increased the demand for homes resulting in properties being built on flood plains and in areas with out sea defences threatened by coastal erosion.

With these pressures on our restricted land area surely it would be common sense to have a positive attitude and policies for the provision and maintenance of sea defences for **all** at risk areas.

The Norfolk Broads and Fen-land established unique fresh water wild life habitats will be destroyed by salt water egress if defences are not provided and maintained.

Much of Norfolk and Lincolnshire below sea level hard won productive farm land will be destroyed and we will be more reliant on foreign produce, if defences are not provided; so why is it such a problem for a rich and technically advanced country to provide sea defences to save lives and irreplaceable land.

Holland has much more low level land threatened by the sea than the UK but they are able to defend every square metre.

I appreciate that you have had recent consultations with Malcolm Kirby who is campaigning for Happisburgh (North Norfolk) Sea defences but I am a Norfolk man who has resided in this area all my life and am very concerned about the accelerated erosion of the entire Norfolk coastline and consequential flooding of adjacent below sea level areas. I feel that the Norfolk Broads and our fresh water marsh wild life habitats are precious, irreplaceable and should be preserved.

I hope it will not take another 1953 Storm Surge disaster (which caused the loss of over 300 lives along the East coast) to motivate the government regarding the importance of sea defences to save lives and irreplaceable land.

I appreciate you have a very busy schedule but hope you can find the time to answer my important questions in this letter and my enclosed document.

Yours truly

Mike King - MARINET (Marine Environmental Information Network) Great Yarmouth Norfolk

Enclosed: (ENC1)

My question to Joan Ruddock MP during her 'On the Spot' on-line debate 28/03/2008