Dear Rupert,

Ballast Water Convention

When you gave evidence to our inquiry on Invasive non-native species in March you told us that the Government was not in a position to ratify the Ballast Water Convention because sampling and analysis procedures were still unclear. We called in our report for ratification, nevertheless, on a precautionary principle approach. The subsequent Government Response to our report in June repeated the Government's misgivings about sampling and analysis.

We have received the attached letter from the All Party Parliamentary Group on Biodiversity, raising the issue again, against a background of a still growing risk of ballast-water-borne invasive species in the period before the EU Invasive Alien Species Regulations become operative.

With some months having elapsed since we took evidence from you on this, the Committee would be grateful if you could set out the latest assessment of the pros and cons of ratifying the Convention now, and when you expect such a UK ratification will take place. We would also welcome your assessment of the points made by the APPG in their letter.

Very Best Wishes,

Joan Walley MP
Chair, Environmental Audit Committee