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The Co-Chairs
Cleaner Air for Scotland Governance Group
Scottish Government

23 March 2018

Dear Co-Chairs,

Resignation from Cleaner Air for Scotland Governance Group

It is with regret that I write today to inform you that Scottish Environment LINK is resigning from the Cleaner Air for Scotland Governance Group (CAFSGG), the stakeholder group which has been set up to ensure that mechanisms are in place so that Scotland's air quality is among the best in Europe, and legally compliant by 2020. LINK has been represented by Professor James Curran MBE, LINK Honorary Fellow, and Emilia Hanna, Air Pollution Campaigner for Friends of the Earth Scotland. I wish to explain very clearly our reasons for resigning, because we have not taken this decision lightly. We wanted the CAFSGG to be a success and were keen to ensure there was appropriate ambition and focus within the Group. However, we have regrettably come to the conclusion that, in continuing to remain on the Group, we would be compromising the integrity of Scottish Environment LINK, and lending LINK's environmental credentials to legitimise a process which is failing the people of Scotland.

We want Scotland's air quality to be legally compliant as soon as possible, in line with Scotland's obligations under European law and in line with the continued urgent and pressing need to stop preventable early death and ill-health for exposed populations. It is clear to us that continuing to be represented on the CAFSGG is no longer an effective route for us to pursue that aim.

Over the past two years, the LINK representatives have raised numerous concerns, including: delivery model, terms of reference, individual responsibilities, organisational responsibilities, support and resources, programme management, performance monitoring, performance reporting, external communications, engagement of decision-makers, delivery of sub-tasks, commitment, ambition, and urgency.

In particular, for two years the LINK representatives have made every constructive effort to inject ambition and urgency into the creation of Low Emission Zones (LEZs) in Scotland. At nearly every single stage they have felt frustrated by lack of progress.

The result for Low Emission Zones is that Glasgow's, and Scotland's first, LEZ proposal is far weaker than it could be - in part, we believe, because elected representatives lack the evidence they need to be as bold and as ambitious as they would like to be. Judging by available modelling, the Glasgow LEZ in its current design seems guaranteed to result in continued illegal and therefore dangerous levels of air pollution in Glasgow streets after 2020.

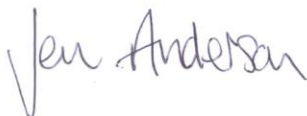
In addition the LINK representatives have been disappointed in the resourcing, determination and performance management and reporting of the work of the Group. The result is that the CAFSGG is well behind in delivering its stated aims which will therefore render the Scottish Ministers' commitment for legally compliant air quality by 2020 almost certainly impossible to achieve across Scotland.

We are therefore left with no choice but to withdraw LINK's representation on the Group.

We still believe that clean air is achievable in only a few years, and that both the implementation of meaningful LEZs and the adoption of truly sustainable transport policies can deliver the healthy environments that every person has a right to enjoy.

We now believe that we can be more effective working outside of the Group. We recognise that among elected representatives, civil servants, and Ministers, there is certainly enough dedication, expertise and ambition for clean air to be achieved. We have met with ambitious, proactive, visionary Councillors who want to go as far as possible, particularly in Glasgow. We will continue our influencing role, but using more effective channels where we can work from a position of integrity. We will continue to engage with and encourage local authority officials and councillors, Government Ministers, Transport Scotland, and SEPA. But we will also publicly demand much more effective action.

Yours sincerely,



Jen Anderson
Chief Officer