



PRIME MINISTER

att. 3065
 pls please

ACID RAIN

I have become very concerned over recent months that many of the excellent things we are doing in protecting the environment are failing to make the political impact we would like because we are finding ourselves isolated over our refusal to join other European nations in the symbolic "30% club". Early next month William Waldegrave has to go to Helsinki for a meeting of the Executive Body of the UN/ECE (Geneva) Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution, at which a protocol on "30% club" lines will be the main issue. If we maintain our refusal there I am in no doubt that we will receive a very bad press indeed at home as well as abroad. We are under increasing pressure in the House of Commons, from the Select Committee and from the many environmental bodies who find our line increasingly inexplicable.

My advisers are now of the view that, give or take a point or two, the necessary reduction in UK sulphur dioxide emissions is likely to take place by 1993 without our incurring any additional expenditure. In other words, we are on course to achieve the goal of the 30% club on present trends.

I believe therefore that we should reconsider the line that we took a year ago. I have accordingly prepared a paper, a copy of which I enclose, which I hope may be considered at E(A) in time to give William Waldegrave an appropriate remit for the Helsinki meeting.

I am copying this minute to the other members of E(A), to the Foreign Secretary and to Sir Robert Armstrong and Sir Robin Nicholson.

PJ

P J
 24 June 1985