

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP**  
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

14<sup>th</sup> December 2017

*Dear Con Artist,*

**RE: BLUE BELT CHARTER.**

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of the Blue Belt Charter; your comments upon which I have read with great interest.

I am delighted that 23 new Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) have been announced, in addition to the 27 designated in the last Parliament and over 500 other marine protected areas that already existed in the UK. Together, these help fulfil the ambitious pledge to create a 'Blue Belt' of protection for our diverse marine wildlife, which now covers over 20 percent of English waters.

This brings the number of English MCZs to 50, covering an area roughly equivalent to the whole of Wales, or 13 times the size of Greater London. They will protect 45 different types of habitat, geological features and fascinating sea creatures, including stalked jellyfish and spiny lobsters.

The new Zones represent the second of three phases of MCZs, the third of which will be put out for consultation soon. They build on further work to protect the marine environment, which includes new consultations on Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) for harbour porpoise and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) to protect feeding and bathing areas used by iconic seabirds, such as spoonbills in Poole Harbour and puffins on the Northumberland coast.

A new marine protected area has also been announced to surround the Pitcairn Islands, and the Blue Belt will be extended around the UK's 14 Overseas Territories where there is local support and environmental need. It was announced recently that the Atlantic Ocean's largest marine reserve is being created around Ascension, covering an area almost the size of the United Kingdom.

Last week, it was also announced that a newly classified marine Special Protection Area (SPA) will come into force along a 24 mile stretch of coast from Falmouth Bay to St Austell Bay in Cornwall. The area – equivalent to almost 55,000 football pitches – is the UK's most important site for the wintering black throated diver. This new protection will help to minimise disturbance to the feeding areas and marine habitats the birds rely on; providing a safe haven where they can spend the winter.



By leaving the Common Fisheries Policy, taking back control of our territorial waters, granting access to other countries and allocating quotas all on the basis of what is scientifically sustainable, we can set and follow the very highest standards in marine conservation. At the same time, we can support the revival of our coastal communities.

When designing future environmental and fisheries policy I know that Ministers will keep sustainability at the forefront of their efforts, as they consistently have in previous negotiations.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

*With best wishes,*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tom'.

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP  
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT  
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**