



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

4<sup>th</sup> December 2023

*Dear Constance,*

**RE: OCEAN PROTECTION**

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns about ocean protection. I have read your comments with interest.

First, thank you for your kind invitation to attend the High Seas Alliance and Great Blue Ocean's reception in Parliament held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2023. Unfortunately, owing to prior, longstanding diary commitments, I was unable to attend, although please rest assured that I will continue to follow the issues raised closely.

The UK is a global leader in protecting our seas, the ocean and marine life, working with counterparts both in the UK and overseas.

Almost 200 countries agreed a deal to protect nature at COP15 in December 2022, including a global commitment to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 and also to protect 30 percent of land and oceans by 2030. I understand that nearly 8.3 percent of the global ocean is protected. The UK has announced nearly £30 million to support developing countries to deliver the '30 by 30' target. In addition, in March, UN Member States agreed the 'High Seas Treaty', which aims to place 30 percent of the seas into protected areas by 2030.

Further, 374 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) protect 38 percent of UK waters, which are all subject to planning and licensing regimes to ensure they are protected from harmful activities. The Government's 'Environmental Improvement Plan' (EIP) sets the country on a path to deliver an improved marine environment and halt the decline in biodiversity, which benefits us all. As set out in the EIP, the Government has a statutory target to have 70 percent of designated features in MPAs in a favourable condition by 2042, with the remainder in a recovering condition.

I am also aware that at the 2022 United Nations Ocean Conference, the UK, US and Canada launched the Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing Action Alliance, which brings together state and non-state actors to tackle illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. Through committing to implement international agreements, promote active monitoring, control and surveillance, and encourage transparency and data sharing, this alliance is growing and has welcomed several new countries to its membership.

In addition, the Government has pledged funding to support marine protection, ocean research and activities to combat illegal fishing. These investments will bolster initiatives aimed at conserving our oceans and ensuring their long-term sustainability, by allocating resources to these critical areas.



Finally, the first three Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs) have come into force. These areas of the sea will benefit from the highest level of protection, which will exclude all fishing, thus encouraging full recovery of marine ecosystems. For HPMAs to be successful, the Government will work with the fishing industry, other marine industries, and sea users, in designating, managing and monitoring them.

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 be 'Tom Pursglove', with a stylized flourish underneath.

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