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Secretary of State

The Rt Hon Chris Patten MP
Secretary of State for the Environment
Department of Environment
2 Marsham Street
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21 August 1990

Dear Chris

at top

Thank you for the copy of your letter to Geoffrey Howe of 23 July about new burdens on local government. I agree that any additional demands on local government should be kept to an absolute minimum.

Where health and safety is concerned the Health and Safety Commission (HSC) are charged, under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, with bringing forward proposals to modernise progressively health and safety law. This process involves the replacement of over-prescriptive and too detailed legal requirements which impede technological development with regulations which are flexible enough to allow precautions to be matched to risks.

Proposals from the HSC for new regulations are always accompanied by a cost benefit analysis, and are also subject to full consultation with all parties who will be affected. Local authorities were consulted on both the HSC proposals included in the Annex to your letter. They were generally supportive of the proposed Control of Explosives Regulations, the costs of which were likely to be low according to the Association of Metropolitan Authorities.

With regard to the amendments to the Control of Major Accident Hazard Regulations 1984 local authorities should be able to recoup most of their additional costs. However, in response to concerns expressed by DoE's New Burdens Office, who were consulted at an early stage, suitable references to charging will be included in an explanatory letter to be sent to all local authorities when the new regulations come into force.



Employment Department Training Agency
Health and Safety Executive · ACAS



Secretary of State
for Employment

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Members of E (LG)
and to Sir Robin Butler.

Yours ever
Michael

MICHAEL HOWARD

LOCAL Govt: Relations
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