



## PRESS RELEASE

No: 52

Date: 23rd January 2019

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### **Mr Hammond is Out of His Depth on Environmental Matters**

Yet again Trevor Hammond is out of his depth. Once again, his inability to research, let alone understand, environmental issues has been laid bare for all to see.

Trevor is now worried about benzene from shipping. He clearly does not recall that smells from bunkering were much, much worse before 2012. He seems not to be aware that the Port Authority chairs regular Bunker Forums with operators in order to keep track of any technological advancements and incorporate them into the local regulations. Gibraltar currently has the strictest limits in place to tackle hydrogen sulphide, the compound which is directly responsible for so called 'bunker smells'. All bunker deliveries are carried out under the framework of a code of practice - which is internationally recognised as an industry exemplar of best practice - and the procedures contained within this framework are constantly reviewed and revised: procedures that have resulted in a huge reduction in reported smells from bunkering as well as a dramatic improvement in all environmental and safety key performance indicators.

It seems that Trevor is, in fact, wanting bunkering in Gibraltar to stop altogether, which would please the ports of Algeciras and Ceuta to no end. If that is not what he wants, he does not offer any solutions other than ships being anchored further away. He seems not to realise (but then he is so out of touch) that this Government introduced a 1.5 mile no-anchoring zone on the east side. While this has no bearing on bunkering smells (as there is not bunkering on the east side) it does ensure that emissions from ships' engines are much further away than previously. Anchoring on the southwest is necessary due to lack of suitable or permissible anchorage elsewhere, but limited to a relatively small area and ships are anchored at the furthest possible even within this. This Government also increased the staff, resources and equipment available for the Port Authority to continue to enforce the strictest controls on the bunkering industry in Gibraltar.

Benzene is indeed something to be worried about, but Trevor seems not to be even aware that levels of benzene in the atmosphere have in fact been falling steadily since 2011 and are well below EU limits. These levels are monitored continuously at Rosia Road and the results can be seen in the accompanying tables and graph.

Work is nevertheless continuing on improving air quality and reducing benzene. This includes



continuing discussions with Gibdock on providing onshore power.

Mr Hammond does not even mention the reduction in pollution that we will see from burning gas at the new power station and he would have us ignore the fact that he spent the whole of the 2015 election campaign trying to STOP the Government from bringing in gas and actually campaigned vigorously FOR MORE BENZENE, by proposing that we should continue to burn diesel!

Clearly, Mr Hammond still has a great deal to learn on environmental matters.

Minister for the Environment John Cortes said, "I have repeatedly said, and I will not tire of repeating, that we have to continue to work towards cleaner and cleaner air. And we are doing so. We have done more than any previous Government ever even considered possible and I will not accept any accusation from anyone that we are not trying and that we do not care. Monitoring results speak for themselves and we will continue to work towards achieving ever lower levels of every pollutant."