

MoorLands for Climate and Nature

PRESS RELEASE

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UK Government fails to protect citizens and climate from moorland burning

Communities lying victim to toxic smoke from heather burning call out DEFRA's proposed policy as a dereliction of Government's first duty to protect its citizens.

DEFRA confirms that heather burning produces huge plumes of smoke which travel long distances impacting air quality across communities with PM2.5, the most serious pollutant for human health. Their proposed policy then flatly fails to protect communities.

A spokesperson for Moorlands for Climate & Nature said, "Communities across great swathes of northern England will be left exposed to the most serious health risk from PM2.5, strongly associated with strokes, cardiovascular disease, asthma and some lung cancers."

DEFRA admits that burning pollutes drinking water costing bill payers £millions, and it destroys vital carbon stores with damaged peatlands responsible for a whopping 5% of UK greenhouse gas emissions. They also recognise that wetter peatlands increase biodiversity and reduce flood and wildfire risk, yet their policy fails on all counts.

Responding to the consultation, Moorlands for Climate & Nature continued, "The proposed policy defies its own climate and health warnings, conflicts with DEFRA's responsibility to improve and protect the environment and violates almost every Government policy, target or treaty to protect climate, nature and air quality."

The DEFRA consultation is also in breach of the Government's consultation principles. It fails to engage communities who suffer the worst impacts from heather burning while misleading information implies it's all in the interests of the natural environment, pandering to propaganda from grouse moor owners who have *destroyed* our natural environment. Intensive grouse moor management is responsible for the most abhorrent and unnecessary destruction of climate, nature and public health which DEFRA seem hellbent on continuing to licence.

MoorLands for Climate & Nature concluded, "This policy consultation must be ripped up and replaced with a proposal to ban heather burning on grouse moors across all England, to provide the protection our climate, nature and citizens so urgently need."

More information and our consultation response are available at
<https://moorlands4climate-nature.org.uk>

Notes to editors

We are a community of lifelong climate and nature supporters who bear first-hand witness to the fires burning all around us, the destruction of our carbon stores, our burnt and barren landscape, and the pollution of our people.

We bear witness to the UK's most abhorrent and unnecessary destruction of climate, nature, landscape and public health.

You can contact us at moorlands4climate-nature@proton.me