

Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP  
Secretary of State  
Department for Transport  
Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
London  
SW1P 4DR

Dear Secretary of State Alexander,

CC: Rt Hon Ed Miliband MP, Rt Hon Peter Kyle MP, Rt Hon Emma Reynolds MP, Rt Hon Keir Mather MP, Rt Hon Chris McDonald MP

We, the undersigned, are writing to express our grave concerns about government proposals to further integrate crop-based biofuels into the UK SAF Mandate.

At a time of ongoing war in Ukraine and an escalating crisis in the Middle East, global food insecurity is a greater threat than ever. Agriculture must focus on providing sufficient nourishment for people above all other concerns. Food prices have already [risen by 38.6%](#) since November 2020, and are likely to increase further with compromised supplies of grain, fertiliser and fossil fuels through the strait of Hormuz. The UK SAF mandate promises to drive up a huge new demand for liquid biofuels already in great demand for ground transport, shipping, heat and power. If crop based fuels are made eligible, food producing agricultural lands will be converted to produce fuel crops, driving up the commodity prices for food basics. Ultimately that will [impact nutritional status for millions of people already facing food insecurity](#) here in the UK and around the globe.

Furthermore, crop-based biofuels, regardless of where the feedstock is grown, pose sustainability risks due to the impacts of [land use change, monoculture, fertiliser and pesticide contamination](#), depletion of water supplies and potential soil degradation. When made from soya or palm oil cultivated abroad, there are also issues of [community dispossession, unsafe and poorly-paid working conditions](#), transport emissions and global injustice to consider. Grown domestically, there are few oilseed crops that would suit our climate and soils, and of these, many cover crops would no longer provide the soil health benefits they are designed for if harvested instead of ploughed back into the soil. Food security issues are particularly salient at this time - much British farmland is already cultivated for non-food crops, such as alcohol feedstocks or animal feed, and it would be deeply reckless and short-sighted to convert even more arable land away from food producing. [As escalating climate instability threatens harvests with flood, drought, pest infestations and nutrient loss](#), it has never been more crucial to create a sovereign, diverse, resilient and nature-friendly food system. Pursuing crop-based biofuels goes against every one of these principles. The UK is already a net importer of food, meeting 40% of our requirements through purchasing commodities from abroad, and [in 2024 our wheat imports were the highest they have been for thirty years](#). Diverting any more grain from food to fuel at this time is clearly a mistake.

In the 2023 consultation, the UK government committed to avoid feedstocks that would drive deforestation or compete with food production. That commitment to “prevent diversion of resources away from food production” was restated in 2025. Reversing that commitment, plainly stated, will force more people into food insecurity.

SAF itself is a mistaken policy direction, given that [no currently viable fuels actually provide reliable emissions savings on kerosene](#). To meet our climate targets it is essential we rapidly curtail aviation in the coming decade. While some place their faith in third-generation biofuels or e-fuels, we have very little confidence that these technologies will ever be either scalable or sustainable. Scarce funding would be far better directed towards proven effective alternatives to air travel.

**Biofuelwatch**  
**EcoNexus**  
**Stay Grounded Network UK Chapter**  
**Communities Against Gatwick Noise Emissions**  
**Group for Action on Leeds Bradford Airport**  
**Flight Free UK**  
**The Wildlife Trusts**  
**Landworkers' Alliance**  
**Airport Expansion Opposition Southampton**  
**Pesticide Action UK**  
**Campaign Against Climate Change**  
**Community Planning Alliance**  
**FoodRise**  
**BirdLife Europe and Central Asia**  
**Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign**  
**Nature Friendly Farming Network**

