

British Aggregates Association

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Dear Alison

Nationally significant infrastructure planning: extending the regime to business and commercial projects.

We are pleased to respond to this consultation as British Aggregates Association (BAA) and also in my capacity as Director of The Barytes Association, an international group who provide some two-thirds of this mineral product and have three members in the UK who produce all the UK output of both barytes and fluorspar.

BAA represents the interests of 105 members of which over two-thirds are independent and privately-owned SME quarry companies throughout the UK with some 12% of national output and who operate out of over 200 sites. We are part of the consultation and lobbying process both in the UK and Europe – and are also represented through the CBI (Confederation of British Industry) Minerals Group and CPA (Construction Products Association); and actively and constructively engaged with the UK Minerals Forum which consists of all stakeholders with interests with the minerals industry. This includes central, devolved and local government officials; planners, heritage groups and NGOs as well as industry representatives.

As members of the CBI Minerals Group we are fully supportive of and endorse the views expressed in their response to you on this consultation. As they note minerals are essential for sustainable economic growth, and sustainable development is only achievable by ensuring an adequate and steady supply of all minerals. Adequate supplies are crucial for meeting the Government's growth agenda and in particular aims for investment in new infrastructure such as the new generation of nuclear power stations and high speed rail; and a renaissance in much needed manufacturing in this country.

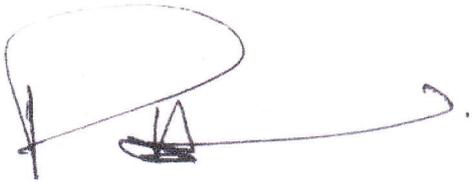
We strongly support the proposal to opt into the nationally significant infrastructure regime if and when our member companies feel appropriate. However using an arbitrary area basis such as the 100 ha proposed threshold is too broad a criteria for doing so. The rarity and economic importance of the mineral we believe is more appropriate. Certain minerals such as barytes and fluorspar only occur in sensitive areas and are have historically been considered of national importance and vital to the security of supply to key chemical, metallurgical, automotive and the oil and gas extraction industries. The DTI Materials and Engineering Unit recognised this in their policy guidance paper on "The Economic Importance of Industrial Minerals for Planning Applications" dated November 2003.



As the CBI Minerals group have noted we as an industry have not yet had sufficient time to fully debate the need for a nation policy statement for minerals. There are strong arguments for greater recognition by Government of the nationally significant role indigenous minerals play in underpinning the economy to supplement the NPPF and they would welcome the opportunity to have further dialogue on this important issue.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information or clarification on the attached completed questionnaire.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Peter Huxtable', with a large loop at the start and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Peter Huxtable
MA (Cantab), CEng, FIMMM, FIQ