



Chris Heaton-Harris
Member of Parliament for Daventry
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
Tel: 020 7219 7048

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Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about diesel vehicles.

In recent years it has become more apparent that harmful emissions other than carbon dioxide (CO₂) produced by diesel engines, notably nitrogen oxides (NO_x), are significant contributors to pollution and poor air quality. Not only do we therefore need to continue to incentivise the purchase of cars with low CO₂ emissions, we also need to incentivise cleaner diesel engines.

Cleaner diesel cars and vans can play an important part in driving down CO₂ emissions during the transition to zero emission vehicles. However for diesel vehicles to play their part fully, their air quality impact must continue to be reduced. I therefore welcome the continued innovation and investment by vehicle manufacturers to develop cleaner diesel vehicles that meet the more challenging real driving emissions (RDE) requirements that were introduced in 2017, delivering critical improvements in NO_x emissions on our roads.

I know that the Government sees tax and spending policy as playing an important role in tackling climate change and reducing air pollution. However, with regard to incorporating air quality pollutants into vehicle taxation, laboratory tests cannot currently measure NO_x to a level of accuracy comparable with real-world driving emissions. As such, the Vehicle Exercise Duty (VED) system currently continues to be based on CO₂, allowing for a banded system.

That said, the Government has implemented a temporary levy on new diesel cars to encourage manufacturers to bring forward the next generation of clean diesels.

Thank you for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY

Website: www.heatonharris.com