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BCA PRE-BUDGET PRESS RELEASE

BRITISH HOMES, SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS SHOULD BE BUILT WITH BRITISH CEMENT AND CONCRETE

The British Cement Association (BCA) today called on the Chancellor of the Exchequer to recognize in his Budget next week, the strategic contribution of the domestic cement industry in meeting the country's economic and social development goals. Reminding him of the promise he made in his pre-Budget speech last November, that the Government would respond to the rising aspirations of the British people, the BCA, whose members are Castle Cement, CEMEX UK, Lafarge Cement UK and Tarmac Buxton Lime and Cement, pointed out that if the Government is to deliver on its promises of more homes, schools, health care facilities and better infrastructure, then the country needs the materials to build them - and that means cement and concrete. Only cement and concrete are fire and flood resistant and have natural warming and cooling properties that will help to reduce energy usage in a period of climate change.

“Cement and concrete are essential to achieving the economic development that will flow from better infrastructure and the social development aspirations of the public who demand new and better homes, schools and health care facilities” said Professor Pal Chana, Acting Chief Executive of the BCA. “Cement is a local product made in Britain and supplies are essential to help the construction and civil engineering industries meet government's challenging targets. It is vital that a healthy and competitive domestic cement industry is maintained if we are not to risk ‘carbon and jobs leakage’ to non-carbon constrained countries. It is also essential that we do everything we can to avoid ‘carbon miles’ associated with imports”.

The BCA said “A taxation system that encourages imports and carbon leakage would be a disaster for the economy and the planet; we urge the Chancellor and the Government to think very carefully before introducing new burdens on industry; this means, amongst other things, ensuring that the cement industry is recognized as a ‘potentially competitively impacted sector’ under the EU Commission’s proposals for EU ETS Phase III.

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Notes to editors:

1. The British Cement Association (BCA) is the trade and research organisation representing the interests of the United Kingdom’s cement industry in its relations with government, the European Union and relevant UK organisations. The members of the BCA (Castle Cement, CEMEX UK, Lafarge Cement UK and Tarmac Buxton Lime and Cement) are the major domestic manufacturers of Portland cement producing over 90% of the cement sold in the UK. Recent statistical information published by BCA shows a gradual rising trend in increasing imports: this is set to accelerate if the government focuses heavily on ‘green taxation’. In 2007 construction was 7% of GDP and the cement sector has an essential role to play in the industry.
2. The cement industry has an annual turnover of £775 million and is a major supplier to the construction industry. It employs around 3,500 people directly with a further 15,000 jobs depending upon its operations.
3. EU ETS Phase III of the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme is a Europe-wide scheme which aims to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide in order to combat the serious threat of climate change. EU ETS puts a price on carbon that businesses use and creates a market for carbon.

Further information on BCA activities can be downloaded from www.cementindustry.co.uk