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BCA supports legal footing for Government target on reducing CO₂ emissions

The British Cement Association is supportive of the Government's aim of achieving a 60% reduction in CO₂ emissions on 1990 levels by 2050, as announced in today's Queen's Speech, and the enshrining into law of the target.

While there have been calls from other quarters for the government to go further in its Climate Change Bill, care must be taken not to inadvertently harm the competitiveness of UK industry through the introduction of unwarranted green taxes. Greater Government support for investment in energy efficiency and in resources for the acceleration of the deployment of innovative technologies, such as carbon capture and storage, will be necessary if the UK is to meet its climate change commitments.

The setting of interim targets/ milestones for reducing CO₂ emissions would be a realistic mechanism for delivering cuts in emissions and would provide industry with greater certainty for capital investment strategies in new plants and technology. This is fundamental if industry is to have a real chance of meeting the Government's target of a 60% reduction in CO₂ emissions on 1990 levels by 2050.

British Cement Association Chief Executive, Mike Gilbert, commented, 'the cement industry is working actively to tackle climate change and has reduced its direct CO₂ emissions by around 28% since 1990. This has meant a saving of over three million tonnes of CO₂ over this period'.

The establishment of an independent carbon committee to work with Government to reduce emissions over time and set out monitoring and reporting arrangements to Parliament is a sensible approach; it should increase the transparency of the new measures, as well as of the performance of sectors towards meeting their CO₂ emissions targets. The Government has rightly focussed its efforts on carbon reduction across the economy.

The British Cement Association looks forward to the publication of the Bill and working with the Government to achieve balanced and workable legislation.

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Further information:

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Notes to editors:

1. The British Cement Association (BCA) is the trade and research organisation that represents the interests of the United Kingdom's cement industry in its relations with Her Majesty's Government, the European Union and relevant organisations in the United Kingdom. The members of the BCA (Buxton Lime Industries, Castle Cement, Lafarge Cement UK and CEMEX UK Cement) are the major domestic manufacturers of Portland Cement producing over 90% of the cement sold in the UK.
2. Britain is responsible for around only 2% of global CO₂ emissions. The largest emitters of CO₂ are the US (20% of global emissions), China (15%) and India (5%); unlike the UK, these countries have not signed up to the Kyoto Protocol.
3. The UK cement industry is responsible for 1.7% of UK CO₂ emissions. Since 1990, the cement industry has saved three million tonnes of CO₂. This has been achieved by the substitution of virgin raw materials with mineral by-products and waste materials and the use of alternative fuels, such as scrap tyres. The additional environmental benefit of these initiatives has been to divert materials that would otherwise have gone to landfill.