

Rt Hon Lucy Powell MP
Leader of the House of Commons
Private Office of the Leader of the House of Commons
70 Whitehall
SW1A 2AS

13 June 2025

Dear Leader of the House of Commons,

We are writing to you as cross-party members of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the Environment to ask you to find parliamentary time to ratify the Global Oceans Treaty. Taking this action is critical to maintaining the UK's global leadership on international biodiversity and protecting the oceans beloved by the British public.

The Global Oceans Treaty - also known as the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdictions agreement - is crucial to establishing marine protected areas in parts of the ocean that lie beyond national maritime borders. Whilst the treaty was agreed in 2023, it must be formally ratified by each participating nation, which in the UK requires primary legislation. 28 states have now formally ratified the agreement, including France, Spain and Portugal. If the UK fails to ratify quickly it will risk losing its seat at the table for ongoing international negotiations.

Governments had aimed to ratify the treaty by this month's UN Ocean Conference, to ensure it enters into force quickly enough to protect 30% of oceans by 2030. This is a core goal of the [Global Ocean Alliance](#), a 77-country group led by the UK.

The treaty is within the remit of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, who have continually expressed their support for ratifying it. However, time must now urgently be found in the Commons for this business to take place.

The ocean produces at least 50% of the planet's oxygen, is home to most of earth's biodiversity, and globally more than 40 million people will be employed by ocean-based industries by 2030. Yet society is taking more from the ocean than can be replenished, with 90% of big fish populations depleted and 50% of coral reefs destroyed.

International waters that will be protected by the Global Oceans are vulnerable to exploitation, including from industrial fishing and oil drilling. Currently, less than 1% of the high seas – which comprises almost two-thirds of the world's ocean – is fully or highly protected from human activities.

As an issue supported by politicians from all major parties, where lack of actions risks damaging the UK's international reputation for marine conservation, we hope you can find time for this important piece of parliamentary business.

Yours sincerely,

Wera Hobhouse MP, Vice Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Environment

Uma Kumaran MP

Ellie Chowns MP

Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

A list of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the Environment's associate members, who support and fund the APPG's work, is available to view [here](#) and in the register. Secretariat is provided by Green Alliance, an independent think tank and charity focused on ambitious leadership for the environment. For a full list of Green Alliance's funders and partners, please visit our [webpage](#) and read our [latest annual report](#).

Baroness Parminter

Simon Opher MP

Lord Cameron of Dillington

Afzal Khan MP

Alex Sobel MP

Earl Russell

Baroness Walmsley