



LOCAL AUTHORITIES INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANISATION

PRESS RELEASE

Friday 16th September 2011

Local authorities disgusted at the governments continued determination to remove Emergency Towing Vessels



Local authority members of KIMO UK are disgusted that the Minister for Shipping, Mike Penning, has confirmed today that the Emergency Towing Vessels are to be removed from service in two weeks time. The Minister has been repeatedly told by maritime users, local authorities and indeed members of his own government that the decision is short sighted and that the ETV cover must continue to protect people and the environment for years to come.

The ETV working group has recommended sources of funding to the minister but made it clear that he is the only person in a position to actually put that funding in place yet this request has repeatedly fallen on deaf ears and he chooses to shirk his responsibility.

Mr. Penning continues to believe that responsibility for ensuring the operational safety of ships is properly a matter for the commercial shipping industry, working in partnership with the tug and salvage industries. Will he

still believe this if a large cruise ship is being blown ashore a rugged coastline and no suitable help can be found? He repeatedly mentions oil pollution but ships carry people, toxic chemicals, thousands of containers and many other substances all of which could cost millions to clear up and decimate coastal industries that rely in a natural environment that has not been ruined by pollution.

In Scotland the seas contribute £3.6 billion to the economy, excluding the oil and gas input. Aquaculture (£427 million), fishing (£443 million) and tourism (in excess of £400 million), the primary economic activities and sources of jobs in many peripheral areas, would be decimated by a major pollution incident, a catastrophic prospect especially if it could have been prevented.

KIMO UK insists that Mr. Penning and his officials to take onboard the hard work of the ETV working group and put its funding recommendations into place now.

KIMO UK Chair, Councillor Len Scoullar said *“The Minister insisting that salvage provision is the responsibility of the shipping industry alone shows a distinct lack of understanding of the huge impacts pollution can have on communities and businesses.”*

ENDS

For more information contact:

Tom Piper tom.piper@kimo.shetland.org or 07789790775

Notes to editors

1) KIMO (Local Authorities International Environmental Organisation) is an association of coastal local authorities whose goal is to eliminate pollution from the Northern Seas for more information see www.kimointernational.org