

## WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 3 May

### Supreme Court rules on air quality case

The UK Supreme Court has ruled on the Client Earth vs. DEFRA case on air quality. The Court declared that there has been a breach of Article 13 of the Air Quality Directive, however proceedings are stayed while the other issues concerning the Air Quality Directive are referred to the Court of Justice of the European Union. In its reasoning, the Court noted that it was appropriate to grant a declaration that the UK was in breach of Article 13, which imposes an obligation on EU Member States on nitrogen dioxide limits. In other areas of the case, the Court referred matters around interpretation of articles 22 and 23 of the Directive to the Court of Justice of the EU. These articles relate to postponing of deadlines and setting out air quality plans to meet targets. Parties involved in the case were invited by the Supreme Court to make submissions on the form of questions it puts to the Court of Justice of the EU.

(Source: UK Supreme Court)

[http://www.supremecourt.gov.uk/decided-cases/docs/UKSC\\_2012\\_0179\\_PressSummary.pdf](http://www.supremecourt.gov.uk/decided-cases/docs/UKSC_2012_0179_PressSummary.pdf)

### DfT publishes Freight Carbon Review report

The Department for Transport (DfT) has published its Freight Carbon Review report. The review considered the level of uptake of eco-driving training and fuel savings from both industry-led and voluntary activities. Former Transport Minister Mike Penning MP set up the Review to reconsider the case for government involvement in eco-driving training. DfT concludes that some part of the freight industry are making “substantial efforts” but that “it is less clear around what is happening across the wider industry”. DfT ultimately decided that “operators are best placed to know the particular development needs of their drivers and therefore has no plans to make eco-driving training a mandatory element of periodic training at present but will keep the issue under review.”

(Source: DfT)

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/193767/freight-carbon-review.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/193767/freight-carbon-review.pdf)



### House of Lords committee publishes EU research and innovation report

The House of Lords EU Sub-Committee B (Internal Market, Infrastructure and Employment ) has published a report into the effectiveness of EU research and innovation proposals. Key conclusions from the Committee state that SMEs are severely hampered by the levels of bureaucracy and the time it takes to navigate around rules and regulations surrounding research and innovation grants from the EU. The Committee recognised government’s efforts to review support structures for UK businesses wanting to gain access to EU funds, but said that progress must continue to be made. The report highlights SMMT’s submission to the Committee that stressed the need for greater transparency in how the UK seeks to influence and maximise its opportunities at EU level, as well as recommending that government should engage with a broader group of stakeholders, and that more direct contact with companies would be mutually beneficial. Chairman of the Committee, Baroness O’Cathain, said: “If research and innovation is to drive future economic growth across Europe, the Commission must ensure that everyone can get involved; that time and the application process are no barrier to participation and that the system builds in flexibility to take into account the wide spectrum of interested stakeholders. Only by making participation in research and innovation projects as accessible as possible can we make any headway in ensuring that Europe’s best ideas and

developments are discovered, funded and eventually benefit all Member States.” (Source: EU Sub-Committee B)

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/eu---internal-market-sub-committee-b/news/research-innovation-report-and-evidence/>



## Week ahead

### **Commons Chamber**

Wednesday 8 May  
State opening of Parliament

### **House of Lords**

Wednesday 8 May  
State opening of Parliament  
11:30am: Queen's Speech