

# SPOKES

*The Lothian Cycle Campaign*

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**To:** Ed Miliband MP, Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, Westminster Parliament

6 December 2009

Dear Mr Miliband

## **Copenhagen Climate Summit**

I am writing on behalf of Spokes, and in particular some 60 individuals who are today joining a 35-mile Edinburgh cycle ride in support of the Ride Planet Earth initiative for a strong climate deal at Copenhagen. Ride Planet Earth was started by Kim Nguyen, who has cycled for 16 months from Australia, through Asia and Europe, to Copenhagen, and is now supported in his efforts by concerned cyclists across the world. Today's ride in Edinburgh is one of many in cities around the planet, from China to North America, from South America to Africa, from Australia to Europe. For more information about Ride Planet Earth, and Kim Nguyen's epic journey, raising environmental awareness and supporting environmental initiatives throughout the last 16 months, see his blog at [www.rideplanetearth.org](http://www.rideplanetearth.org).

This letter is being officially delivered to you by Spokes member Mark Lazarowicz MP who, as you will know, has a longstanding concern over climate issues; and who has on a number of occasions raised cycling issues at Westminster.

What can be achieved at Copenhagen, and thereafter, depends on everyone from individuals to governments. As regular bike users, we are making a personal contribution to the decarbonising of transport, collectively we are illustrating what can and must be done within transport, and as a pressure group we are drawing this to the attention of government.

We are delighted with the very ambitious Climate Change Acts passed by the Scottish and UK Governments. However, ambitious policies and targets mean nothing unless reflected in equally ambitious and urgent action in all areas of climate action – notably transport. We of course aware that most transport policy is handled by the Scottish Parliament and have written separately to Cabinet Secretary for the Environment Richard Lochhead MSP – a copy of that letter is enclosed for information. Nonetheless, UK transport policy impacts on Scotland in many ways, not least in the comparisons which can be made in terms both of cycling investment and the conditions on the ground for safe and pleasant cycle journeys.

Over the last decade there has been great concern that neither Westminster or Holyrood have been doing anything comparable to those European countries who have invested properly in cycling as a means of transport, and have as a result achieved high levels of cycling for everyday journeys – a valuable contribution to reduced emissions and a partial insurance against the growing threats to energy security and oil supply. However, in the last 2-3 years, the position on cycling investment in Scotland has if anything worsened, whereas we have been encouraged to see a growing number of funding initiatives at Westminster – most notably since the appointment of Lord Adonis as Transport Minister. These initiatives encourage us to seek parallel or stronger moves at Holyrood.

We do, however, emphasise that Westminster itself needs to do far more – as for example in the powerful proposal by the Association of Directors of Public Health, Institute of Highway Engineers, Sustainable Development Commission and many other professional and expert bodies that 10% of transport investment should go to active travel [[www.adph.org.uk](http://www.adph.org.uk)].

**In conclusion, we urge you to seek a strong agreement at Copenhagen, and to follow this up with action at home.** We on Ride Planet Earth today are doing what we can as individuals in support of the aims of the Scottish and UK Climate Change Acts. We urge your government to do the same – particularly with respect to transport, and notably on policy and funding to raise levels of cycle use for everyday journeys from their present miserable levels to those of our neighbours in Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands.

Yours Sincerely

Dave du Feu

for Spokes and for the December 6<sup>th</sup> participants in the Edinburgh event of Ride Planet Earth

*Enc* – letter from Spokes to Richard Lochhead MSP, Cabinet Secretary for the Environment, Scottish Government