

Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP  
Chancellor of the Exchequer  
HM Treasury  
1 Horse Guards Road  
London  
SW1A 2HQ

14 October 2025

Dear Chancellor,

**Nature is a £1.5 trillion asset – and the UK is sleepwalking into its collapse.**

Britain is sitting on a £1.5 trillion natural asset – and it's being liquidated in slow motion. From collapsing soils to vanishing wetlands, nature loss is now an economic time bomb ticking – unnoticed – beneath our economy.

As the you prepare the Autumn Budget, we, the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management ([CIEEM](http://www.cieem.net)), urge you not to overlook the biggest risk to Britain's long-term prosperity: the degradation of the natural environment that feeds, protects, and employs us.

**The Office for National Statistics has valued the UK's ecosystem services at over £1.5 trillion.<sup>1</sup>**

This is not an abstract figure. It reflects the real, measurable value of nature's contribution to food production, clean water, carbon storage, recreation, and public health. Yet this national asset is being eroded year by year, and with it, our economic resilience. **If the decline continues, recent modelling suggests UK GDP could fall by up to 12% within a decade<sup>2</sup> - a shock on the scale of the 2008 financial crisis. You would not ignore a £1.5 trillion stock market collapse. So why ignore such a loss of natural capital?**

CIEEM is the leading professional membership body representing and supporting over 9,000 ecologists and environmental managers in the UK. We are the experts who assess, restore, and manage the ecosystems that underpin national natural resilience. We share the Government's goal of delivering sustainable economic growth – but we can't achieve this on degraded land and polluted water.

Every pound we fail to invest in nature now will cost taxpayers many times over in mounting flood damage, crop losses, and economic instability down the line. **The 2015-16 floods alone cost the UK £1.6 billion.<sup>3</sup>** Nature-based solutions – from floodplain restoration to urban greening – have been proven to cut these risks at lower cost than traditional engineering. Yet they remain underfunded and underutilised.

**Meanwhile, the green economy is a growth engine hiding in plain sight. ONS data already shows that there are over 526,000 full-time jobs in green sectors** – and that figure excludes most

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<sup>1</sup> [UK natural capital accounts - Office for National Statistics](https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/green-economy/articles/uk-natural-capital-accounts-2024)

<sup>2</sup> [greenfinanceinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/GFI-GREENING-FINANCE-FOR-NATURE-FINAL-FULL-REPORT-RDS4.pdf](https://greenfinanceinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/GFI-GREENING-FINANCE-FOR-NATURE-FINAL-FULL-REPORT-RDS4.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [The costs of the winter 2015 to 2016 floods](https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/green-economy/articles/the-costs-of-the-winter-2015-to-2016-floods)

nature-related employment.<sup>4</sup> With the right investment in ecological skills and infrastructure, we can unlock thousands more jobs, accelerate housebuilding, and deliver on the UK's net zero pledges.

**We therefore urge the Treasury to adopt the following measures in the November Budget:**

1. **Launch a £300 million Ecological Capacity and Skills Fund (5 years):** To embed ecologists in Local Planning Authorities, Natural England, the Environment Agency and transport bodies and to fund apprenticeships.  
**Impact:** This will speed up infrastructure delivery, reduce legal risk, and enable nature recovery alongside development.
2. **Invest £200 million for Nature-Based Solutions Pilots (3 years):** Provide capital grants and match funding for floodplain restoration, peatland recovery, and urban greening in priority areas, with robust monitoring of avoided flood damages, carbon sequestration, and public health outcomes.  
**Impact:** Saves money, protects communities, and strengthens climate resilience.
3. **Create a £150 million Habitat Bank Seed and Market Development Fund:** To capitalise habitat banks and biodiversity credit markets, reducing compliance costs for developers while ensuring measurable habitat delivery and long-term stewardship.  
**Impact:** Unlocks private investment, creates skilled jobs, and restores ecosystems at scale.

**These are not handouts – they are high-return investments. Nature-based solutions deliver better value per pound than hard infrastructure.** Ecological expertise reduces project delays and contingency costs. And public leadership in natural capital markets will de-risk billions in private investment.

The UK cannot afford to underwrite the collapse of its own life-support systems. The Autumn Budget is your chance to turn the tide – before it's too late.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these proposals further and stand ready to support their implementation.

Yours sincerely,



**Sally Hayns**

Chief Executive Officer

Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)

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<sup>4</sup> [Experimental estimates of green jobs, UK - Office for National Statistics](#)