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Our Ref: VSE-MM 4/11/7

14 February 2003

Dear Mr Milnes

DAYTIME RUNNING LAMPS

Thank you for your letters of 16th, 23rd and 29th January to Alistair Darling, Ian McAllister and John Spellar about daytime running lamps. I have been asked to respond.

With reference to your concerns about saving energy, I can inform you that these concerns have already been discussed in European fora. It is accepted that the standard 55W headlamp is not the ideal DRL solution for reasons of power consumption and beam pattern. Lamp suppliers are now working on DRL solutions which consume less energy, such as a 35W DRL which was demonstrated to me recently.

In the meantime some changes have been made to construction legislation. UN-ECE Regulation 48 governs the installation of lighting in Europe and you may be interested to hear of two very recent changes:

Firstly, if a new design of vehicle is fitted with a DRL system, then it is now mandatory to fit a deactivation switch. Therefore the driver can deactivate the DRL if he does not wish to drive with his lights on in the daytime.

Secondly, the wiring of rear position (tail) lights so that they operate with DRL is no longer required. This will reduce energy consumption.

As you know, we feel that the safety benefits or otherwise of daytime running lamps must be considered very carefully. Currently we do not feel that there is sufficient evidence to justify banning the use of DRL in the UK, as you suggest. Therefore for our next piece of research we hope to consider the effect of DRL on vulnerable road users such as motorcyclists, pedal cyclists and pedestrians. This information will assist in taking a position when the subject is next discussed at a European level.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Lowe