



Real action on climate change

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## PRESS RELEASE

Embargoed for 00:01 Tuesday 16th September

### LAUNCH OF NEW GRASS ROOTS MOVEMENT ENABLING REAL ACTION TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

Over the next 5 years, permits for 1.2 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions will be handed out in the UK alone.

To combat this staggering figure, a campaign against climate change with a difference is officially launched today. It's called **Sandbag**<sup>1</sup> and it's aimed at empowering ordinary people to take active steps toward reducing the level of greenhouse gases entering the atmosphere.

Public awareness of climate change is relatively high in the UK. However, many of the actions that are promoted to help individuals make a difference, such as switching to a 'green tariff' or 'off-setting' have only a limited effect. **Sandbag** introduces a new range of actions people can take to tackle this growing threat. Using just an email account and a credit card members of **Sandbag** can remove tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere by engaging with the EU emissions trading scheme and cancel the legal pollution permits that have been created and handed out.

Since 2005 companies operating within the EU have received an annual allocation of permits for a set amount of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. If this allocation is exceeded, the common though not widely understood practice is for a company to buy spare permits from other companies. This practice, known as emissions trading, has never received an adequate level of public scrutiny, mostly due to a combination of powerful industrial lobbying and weak political governance.

It has resulted in a situation where too many greenhouse gas pollution permits are available for sale.

**Sandbag** believes the UK industry, which accounts for roughly 50% of our emissions, has been over-allocated with CO<sub>2</sub> permits. The only people being required to pay for pollution are the users of electricity, whilst all other sectors are sharing a surplus of permits. This amounts to a subsidy of approx £200m per year<sup>3</sup>.

Sandbag Climate Campaign is a not-for-profit enterprise and is in the process of registering as a Community Interest Company under UK Company Law.

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**Sandbag's** unique proposal is to utilise the power of the Internet to open this issue up to public scrutiny, to enable campaigning around the subject and to cancel permits on behalf of its members.

**Sandbag** has taken whatever publicly available information is available about who is allowed to emit what, and made it easy to understand and investigate. To kick things off, a Google map of UK installations currently in the trading scheme, has been launched today. It illustrates emissions from last year and compares them to how many permits they have received to continue emitting this year making it easier to identify where too many permits have been issued.

Bryony Worthington, Founder of the **Sandbag** campaign, says:

“The problem of climate change requires an urgent solution, but so far the words of our leaders have not matched their actions. Fortunately, there are now new ways we can make a difference, by helping to collectively to correct the mistakes of the past and to ensure they are not repeated. Decisions about pollution levels are too important to be left in the hands of industry and politicians alone – it’s time the public was involved and we intend to make that possible.”

**Alan Rusbridger**, Editor of the Guardian and **Bianca Jagger**, Chair of the World Future Council, and President of the Bianca Jagger Human Rights Foundation, will speak at the official launch party which will take place on Tuesday September 16th at the Churchill Museum and Cabinet War Rooms in Whitehall.

Bianca Jagger says:

“In October of last year, Barack Obama called climate change "one of the greatest moral challenges of our generation". He was absolutely right. Our lives and the lives of our children and their children are at stake. We are already running the risk of condemning future generations to the ravages of global warming. If we do not act now, the battle will be lost.”

Continues



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## Notes for the editor:

For more information please call 07876 130 352 visit [sandbag.org.uk](http://sandbag.org.uk) or email: [info@sandbag.org.uk](mailto:info@sandbag.org.uk)

### 1. Why 'Sandbag'?

Increasing global temperatures will lead to higher sea levels and more severe weather. Sandbags are a traditional form of self defence against threats – our campaign is a way of defending ourselves against the threat of climate change so that we will need fewer real sandbags in the future.

### 2. About the organisation

Sandbag is registered as a not-for-profit Community Interest Company in the UK. The founder Bryony Worthington is an experienced campaigner in the field of climate change and an expert in emissions trading policy. She previously set up the Friends of the Earth 'Big Ask' campaign, worked inside Government on the drafting of the Climate Change Bill and acted as a climate change adviser to a leading UK energy company.

Sandbag is a member of The Guardian Environment Network.

### 3. Facts and figures relating to emissions trading in the UK:

Total number of installations included in the scheme: 907

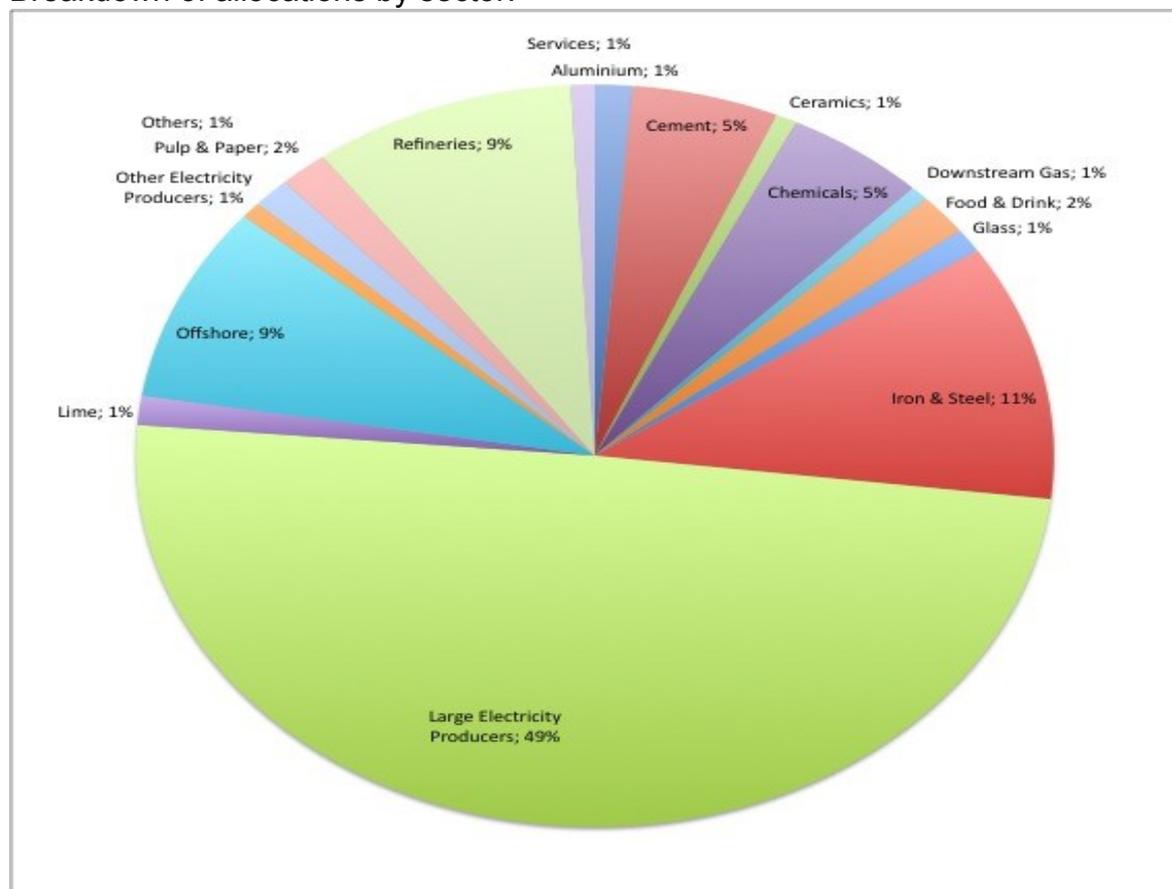
% of UK emissions covered: 51%

Number of companies owning installations in the scheme: ~320

Overall level of allocation of permits in the scheme: 246 million tonnes per year

% of permits handed out for free: 93%

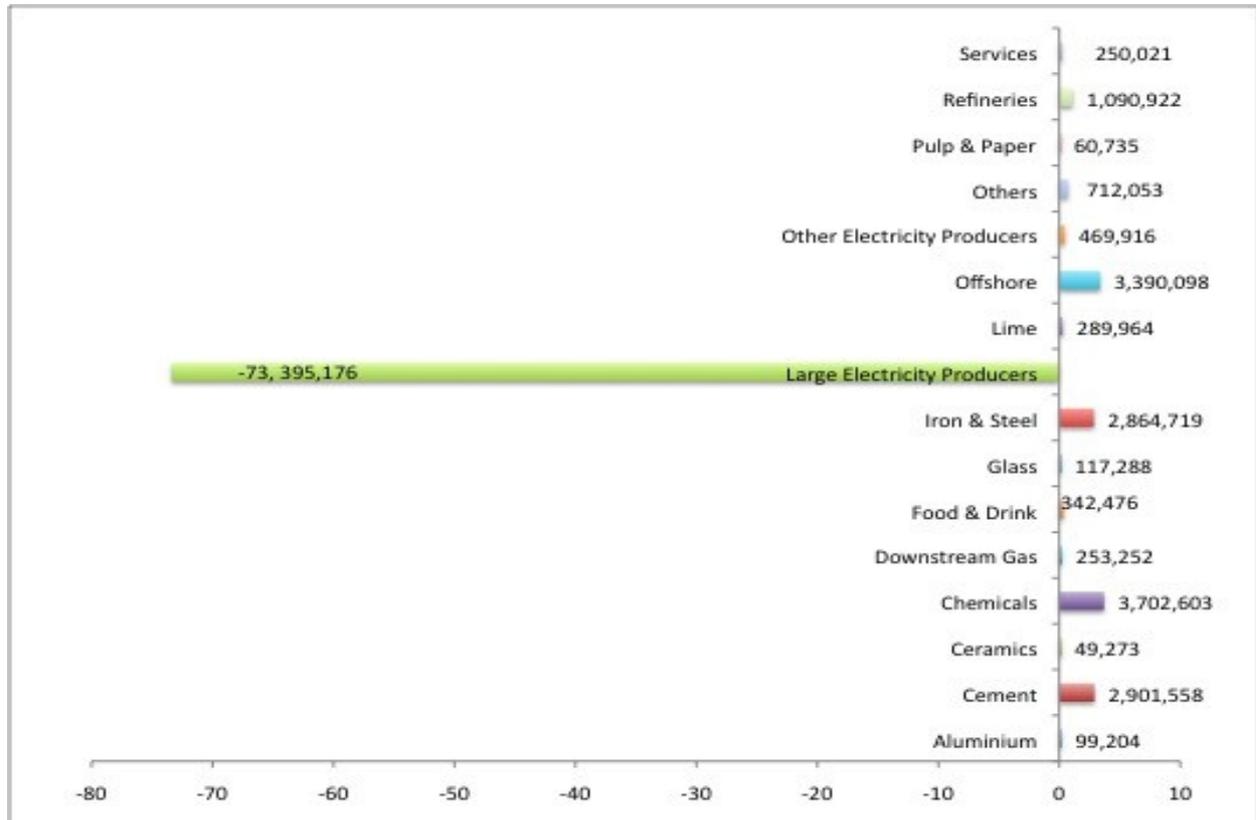
### Breakdown of allocations by sector:



Number of installations with sufficient data to enable us to include them in our analysis\*: 475

% of total allocations covered by this subset of installations: 73%

Difference between 2007 emissions and 2008 allocations: - 64.5 million tonnes



Power sector emissions in 2007 compared to 2008 allocation: - 73.7 million tonnes

Emissions in the non power sector 2007 compared to 2008 allocation: 9.2 million tonnes

Value of this surplus\*\*: £200 million

No of companies with more permits than they need in 2008: ~200

\*In calculating this figure we have used the following methodology:

We only included installations with either 3% or 4,000 more permits than their 2007 emissions and we took out installations with an unusually high or low emissions in 2007 compared to previous years. We also took account of the extra 9.6million tonnes of permits issued for new sources of emissions in 2008.

\*\*Assuming they are sold at today's prices of 25 € per permit/tonne with an exchange rate of 0.9 € to the pound.

ENDS