



Environmental Audit Committee

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

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Tim Cook
CEO, Apple
By Email

4 August 2020

RE: Environmental impact of the electronics industry – request for information

Dear Mr Cook,

The cross-party Environmental Audit Committee of the UK's House of Commons is conducting an inquiry into *Electronic waste and the circular economy*, examining how the UK can ensure a thriving, sustainable and environmentally friendly electronics industry. Leading technology companies involved in the design, manufacturing and distribution of electronics have given evidence to our inquiry and we are disappointed that your organisation was unwilling to follow suit despite your recent high-profile environmental and sustainability announcements as one of the largest electronic brands in the UK and worldwide.

As you know there are increasing concerns about the social and environmental footprint of the electronics industry. The production of electronic equipment is a significant source of carbon emissions and uses a wide range of precious and scarce materials. It is concerning that the sourcing of some of these materials has been linked with human rights abuses. Electronic waste is also the fastest growing waste stream and according to the UN the amount of electronic waste produced per year has increased by 21% in just 5 years to 7.3kg per capita in 2019. There is significant wastage of precious and finite resources, including at least \$57 billion worth of precious metals. Electronic waste has significant health and environmental impacts, including at sites where this waste is dumped or burned, due to the release of materials including toxic chemicals and plastics into the environment. Small electronics, such as smart phones, are the items often hardest to collect and recycle.

The committee is seeking written evidence from electronic producers to inform recommendations to Government on how to reduce the environmental impact of the electronics industry. As Apple was unwilling to send a representative to appear before the Committee in person, we would appreciate your response to the following questions:

1. What are you doing to reduce future carbon emissions and mitigate the impact of your past emissions?
2. How do you audit the carbon emissions of companies in your supply chain, especially those based in countries with a high proportion of fossil fuels in their energy supply?
3. What are the carbon emissions released in the whole lifetime of your latest smartphone and latest laptop from production to end-of-life? How does this compare to previous models?
4. What is the average operating life of the smart phones and laptops that you sell?
5. What steps are you taking to improve the life of your products and prevent premature obsolescence – for example through lack of software and security support?
6. Research has shown that you charge £326 to repair the broken screen of an iPhone 11 and iPhone XS, and £69 to replace the battery when out of warranty¹. Can you outline how you set these prices and breakdown the component parts of those prices? Do you believe this cost of repair incentivises consumers to repair and lengthen the life of their products rather than just replace them?
7. Some research ranks your laptops as some of the hardest to repair, in part because components are glued or even soldered together.² Can you explain why this is the case and what you are doing to improve the repairability of your products?
8. What are you doing to make spare parts and repair manuals available and accessible to the wider public to improve their ability to repair your products? What is preventing you from doing this?
9. Would you support legislation that enshrines a universal right to repair for the public, which would include standards of repairability in product design, wide access to spare parts, and making repair manuals publicly available?

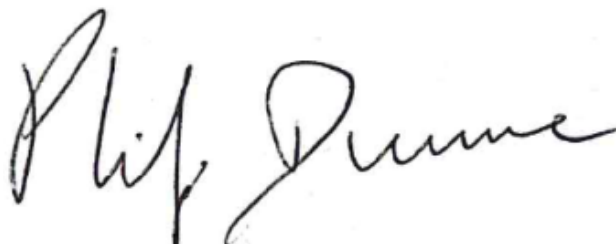
¹ Which.co.uk, [How to repair your smartphone](#), November 2019

² Ifixit.com, [Laptop Repairability Scores](#), 2020

10. What are you doing to ensure your products are designed so that the parts and materials are easy to recycle and re-use in a high-quality manner that retains value?
What else are you doing to improve the collection and recycling rates of your products?
11. How would you like a system of modulated fees under an extended producer responsibility system, as being considered in the UK and the EU, to be designed?
12. What steps are you taking to ensure packaging of products shipped to consumers is fully recyclable and minimises single use plastic?
13. What steps, if any, are you taking to encourage 'take-back' of products being replaced by delivery of new items to consumers?

We would appreciate a response by **Friday 4 September 2020**; thank you for your attention in this matter. Please note that in the interest of transparency the Environmental Audit Committee intends to publish the responses it receives, including nil returns.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Philip Dunne". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rt Hon. Philip Dunne MP
Chair of the Environmental Audit Committee