

The Big Reconnection: Key messages

For more information see <http://www.stopclimatechaos.org/the-big-connection>

The past year provided a timely reminder about how vulnerable we are to extreme weather, with the floods in Australia and Brazil earlier this year, on top of floods in Pakistan and forest fires in Russia in 2010. On top of this the Amazon, one of the world's richest ecosystems, became a net emitter of carbon emissions instead of a climate store. The second severe drought in 5 years killed billions of trees; droughts that once were considered one in a hundred year events.

A recent Committee on Climate Change publication¹ said that a 2 degree global temperature rise could lead to: a reduction in Indian crop production by 10-40 per cent; an additional 1.5 to 2.5 billion people at risk from dengue fever; and a critical risk for drought in south and south-eastern Europe, Australia, north-western Asia and parts of Africa.

It is the world's poorest people, who did least to cause the problem, that are being hit hardest. However, as recent years have shown with food prices, the UK will not be immune to these impacts either.

The UK has led the world in introducing a Climate Change Act as a result of campaigning by hundreds of thousands of ordinary people, including David Cameron and Nick Clegg. David Cameron said climate change "*is the biggest threat facing our planet*" and that there must be an independent body to set targets and enforce them to "*take the politics out of climate change and show our intention to get to grips with the problem*". Ed Miliband shepherded the Climate Change Act through Parliament in 2008 and set up the independent Committee on Climate Change.

We need your help to make sure the Climate Change Act is delivered. The Committee on Climate Change has recommended that the government reduce the UK's carbon pollution by 60 per cent by 2030. At the moment, the government is considering its response.

Please ask your MP to tell David Cameron that he should accept this recommendation. He mustn't back-track on his earlier promise to accept the recommendations of the committee.

In addition the Energy Bill is passing through parliament at the moment. This piece of legislation is critical to the delivery of the Climate Change Act but so far falls well short of what is needed.

Please ask your MP to support the following changes in the Energy Bill:

- Amend the Bill so that the government has a legal duty to implement policies to increase the energy efficiency of the UK's buildings sufficiently to:
 - a) meet the carbon reductions recommended by the Committee on Climate Change (42 per cent cuts by 2020 and 60 per cent by 2030);
 - b) eliminate fuel poverty.
- Within the Bill, make local action on climate change a core responsibility of councils in order to help meet national Climate Change Act targets.

We also need the government to show leadership internationally, please ask your MP to support our call for the UK government to help developing countries respond to climate change and reduce poverty by :

- demanding that the World Bank stop investing in fossil fuels;
- working to ensure all international finance for energy flows to clean energy for poor people;
- pushing for the international community to quickly introduce new innovative funding sources for climate finance, such as a financial transaction tax and revenues from measures to address shipping and aviation emissions.

Action on climate change will create warmer homes, new jobs, better health and a safer world.

The policy asks – background information

Energy efficiency and homes – Millions of people in the UK are living in fuel poverty and have had to suffer cold, damp houses this winter. The UK's housing stock needs a radical energy efficiency refit to eradicate fuel poverty and significantly cut its carbon emissions. Doing so will make a major contribution to meeting Climate Change Act targets (housing is responsible for over a quarter of all UK carbon emissions). It will also create new local jobs, contribute to the economy, protect people's finances during these tough times, and improve health.

At the moment the government has not specified a level of ambition for their energy efficiency programme. A requirement should be inserted into the Energy Bill to ensure the government adopts energy saving policies that are sufficient to deliver on the Climate Change Act targets and eliminate fuel poverty. Such an amendment is needed to ensure that we do not lose this opportunity to make our homes fit for the 21st century.

Local Authority action – The best local authorities are already leading ambitious action to cut carbon emissions from homes, businesses and transport locally. Trailblazing action includes street-by-street home insulation, better transport planning and supporting local green energy production. Sadly, most councils are not doing nearly enough.

Stop Climate Chaos is backing the call of leading councils from all political parties for the Energy Bill to make emissions reduction a core responsibility of every council, to help meet UK Climate Change Act targets.

The councils see that delivering on climate change creates jobs, helps tackle fuel poverty and brings local economic renewal. However, they also see that without a legal duty to deliver on emissions reduction and climate adaptation, funding pressures will lead – and are leading – to this work being shelved. In the current climate, this is leading to the council officers with responsibilities in this area losing their jobs.

International Finance - The World Bank, of which the UK is a board member, has increased funding to coal-fired power 40 fold over the last five years. The UK should push to divert energy-related international finance towards sustainable energy, to benefit the billions of poor people who currently lack modern energy. But much more money is needed to help developing countries adapt to climate change as well as grow using green energy, and the UK and others have promised to provide it. As a member of the G20, the UK government should push to deliver that promise by urgently introducing innovative measures to raise money for action on climate change, such as a financial transaction tax (FTT) and revenues from measures to address shipping and aviation emissions..

ⁱhttp://downloads.theccc.org.uk/s3.amazonaws.com/4th%20Budget/fourthbudget_supporting_research_reviewofclimatescience_developments_since_IPPC_AR4.pdf

ⁱⁱ <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/climate-change-how-green-is-your-mp-424377.html>