

The Climate Change Bill

The Government has now introduced its Climate Change Bill. This Bill will create a new framework for tackling climate change, which is to be welcomed.

However the proposals have several weaknesses. The targets for reducing CO₂ are too low; air travel is not counted; and the purchase of international 'carbon credits' could allow the UK to duck its responsibilities .

This Bill must not be a wasted opportunity. If you agree that climate change is too urgent to take this risk, please consider writing to your MP urgently.

What will the Bill do?

- It creates **statutory targets** for reducing the UK's domestic carbon dioxide emissions by at least 60% by 2050, and by 26-32% by 2020 (all measured from the 1990 baseline).
- It will require future Governments to make five-yearly **Carbon Budgets**, which will set binding limits on carbon dioxide emissions, and will allow policy makers and business to predict and plan for the future.
- It establishes a new, independent **Committee on Climate Change**. The Committee will have the power to review the CO₂ targets in light of new evidence, and to consider the implications of other greenhouse gases and emissions from international aviation and shipping. The Committee will report annually to Parliament on the progress being made towards the targets. Every five years it will review the UK's performance to date and consider the implications for future budgets. It will be made up of experts and will take into account a range of factors in

including environmental, technological, economic, fiscal, social and international factors, as well as energy policy, when giving its advice.

- The Bill will allow **trading in emissions** reductions. Credits purchased overseas can count towards the UK targets.
- It makes provision in a number of other areas, including setting out the **risks** to the UK of climate change and how the country can best **adapt**, increasing the use of **biofuels** in the road transport sector and exploring possibilities for minimising household **waste** and increasing **recycling**.

Further information about the Climate Change Bill is available from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs – www.defra.gov.uk

Why are there still concerns about the Climate Change Bill?

Whilst the Climate Change Bill is good news, it does not go far enough. There are three major areas of concern:

- The CO₂ target of at least 60% by 2050 is too low. Christian Aid, Stop Climate Chaos and others believe that a reduction of at least **80% is necessary**. Although the Climate Change Committee are to be asked to review the targets, we believe that it is necessary to have an 80% target in the Bill at this stage. The 60% target was established by the 2003 Energy White Paper. We believe that recent scientific evidence from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change implies that a UK target of at least 80% is required.

Reduce CO₂ emissions by 80%

- **International shipping and airline emissions must be taken into account.**

Don't ignore the impact of air and sea travel

Air travel is very polluting, and is set to increase substantially over the coming decades. The Government have said that they would prefer to work out shipping and aviation limits at an international level,

and that the Committee on Climate Change will be able to take this into account.

We argue that the targets that are being set now should include all future emissions from air and sea travel and transport.

- The Bill includes provision for the purchase of international carbon credits. These enable UK companies or Government to invest in emission reduction projects in other countries and count these reductions towards their own targets. Between 2008 and 2012, 70% of the UK's emissions agreed under the EU Emission Trading Scheme are planned to be met, not by reducing our own emissions, but by buying foreign credits. We believe that **the use of credits must not allow the UK to duck its responsibility to drastically reduce domestic CO₂ emissions.** The obligation on the UK to reduce carbon emissions cannot be exported overseas. We would like to see the Bill specify a limit on the contribution of foreign credits to achieving UK carbon reduction targets. In our view this limit should be low (some would suggest 5-10% of the UK's carbon reduction target).

Reduce our own emissions, rather than buy "carbon credits"

What can I do?

Please **write to your MP**, or arrange a church, ecumenical or inter faith meeting with them to talk about the Climate Change Bill.

When writing to your MP start your letter by explaining what action you are taking to reduce your own greenhouse gas emissions.

- Offer support for the principle of the Climate Change Bill, and ask them to vote for it.
- Please also ask them to make the Bill even more effective by supporting an 80% reduction in carbon emissions, not ignoring the contribution of air and sea travel, and reducing our own limits rather than relying on buying carbon credits from other countries.

To find the name of your MP visit <http://findyourmp.parliament.uk//commons//> or ring 020 7219 4272. You can write to your MP at the House of Commons, Westminster, London SW1A 0AA. To arrange a meeting with your MP in your constituency ring their office, details of which should be in the local phone directory.

For more information see

The response of the Joint Public Issues Team and the Religious Society of Friends to the Draft Climate Change Bill

www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/jpit_draftclimatebillsubmission_0607.pdf

Christian Aid

www.christianaid.org.uk

I-Count / Stop Climate Chaos

www.icount.org.uk

Operation Noah

www.operationnoah.org

This briefing has been produced by the Joint Public Issues Team

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