

## **CLIMATE CHANGE BILL**

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I am sorry that I cannot be with you tonight as I am engaged on another appointment. I know that climate change is a subject of intense interest for many people and am pleased to be able to contribute.

Climate change is one of the most pressing issues facing the UK today and thanks to David Cameron it has now been forced to the top of the UK political agenda.

The Government agreed to reduce carbon by 20 percent from 1990 levels by 2010 and by 60 percent by 2050. However, Labour looks set to miss the 2010 target, reducing carbon by only 13 percent. Further action is clearly required.

Predictions for the UK indicate that average temperatures will increase by between 2C and 3.5C by 2100, resulting in warmer summers and wetter winters. This could have big implications for our biodiversity and economy.

We know from a recent survey that Reading topped the league of shame for having the highest carbon dioxide emissions in the country.

I am very keen that we actively pursue the concept of decentralised energy and power. If the government is serious about reducing energy waste and emissions then decentralised combined heat and power is a sensible option to consider. I understand that a pioneering model is close by in Woking and I urge people to make the effort to go and look at what they are doing.

The Conservative party has committed to statutory year on year reduction in carbon emissions, and an independent body to ensure this happens. We actively supported the Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Bill, which has now passed into law. But I want to see us go further and reintroduce a Bill which contains the original aims in Michael Meacher's Climate Change Bill as referred to in EDM 178, of a 3% reduction in emissions each year.

This is in line with the Conservative call for an independent statutory body to monitor and *enforce* year-on-year carbon reductions.

Conservatives have also highlighted the importance of individual action in tackling climate change. On 17 January 2006, my colleagues and I were asked to switch our domestic energy supply to a renewable energy supplier as the majority of UK emissions come from buildings. We all have the power, and responsibility, to make a difference.

Locally we can do more – for example, Reading needs a safe and integrated cycle network to provide people with the alternative they need to get them out of their cars and onto a non-polluting alternative.

I am confident that at the end of the current Conservative policy review, being lead by Zac Goldsmith and John Gummer, we will be able to bring forward a far more ambitious and holistic approach to tackling climate change, than any of the rather timid and unimaginative measures the Government has so far introduced. The Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Bill is a welcome step in the right direction but I do hope that a Bill implementing Michael Meacher's original aims in the Climate Change Bill will be introduced in the next session of Parliament.

Regards

**Rob Wilson**