

# Government's ambition to enhance the environment takes crucial step forward

The UK's green future outside the European Union will move a step closer today (Wednesday 26 February) with the Second Reading of the [Environment Bill](#).

Opening the Bill's Second Reading, Environment Secretary George Eustice said the Bill is a keystone in the government's vision to deliver the most ambitious environmental programme of any country on earth.

[The Bill was introduced on 30 January](#) as a key part of this government's commitment to deliver the most ambitious environmental programme of any country on Earth.

By freeing ourselves from future changes to EU law, we will be able to lead the way at home and abroad to deliver global environmental change.

Environment Secretary George Eustice said:

The Prime Minister is clear – and so am I – we will deliver the most ambitious environmental programme of any country on Earth.

This transformative Bill is at the heart of our work. It will see us recycling more and wasting less, breathing cleaner air, planting trees, safeguarding forests, and supporting nature recovery as we work to tackle climate change and reach net zero emissions.

And this is just the start. 2020 is a massive year for our natural environment and the UK will take its place at the head of the world's table when we host the COP 26 climate change conference in Glasgow, driving real change across the planet.

The Environment Bill sets out how we plan to protect and improve the natural environment in the UK, legislating to ensure the environment is front and centre in our future policy making.

The Bill will:

- transform our environmental governance and put environmental principles into law;
- establish the new independent Office for Environmental Protection to

hold the government to account on the environment;

- introduce legally binding targets to drive action by this and all future governments to significantly improve air quality, nature, water, and resource and waste efficiency.

Acting as one of the key vehicles for delivering the bold vision set out in the [25 Year Environment Plan](#), it brings about urgent and meaningful action to tackle the environmental and climate crisis we are facing.

Today, just a few weeks after the Bill was introduced, the primary legislation is being brought forward for Second Reading in the House of Commons. This is the first opportunity for MPs to debate the new Bill.

The Bill sets a new and ambitious domestic framework for environmental governance as we maximise the opportunities created by leaving the European Union.

This landmark Bill will enhance wildlife, tackle air pollution, transform how we manage our resources and waste, and improve the resilience of water supplies in a changing climate to ensure we protect and restore the natural environment.

The Second Reading of the Environment Bill is due to conclude on Wednesday evening.

The Bill will then go to Committee Stage, with Report Stage and Third Reading following this, before transferring to the House of Lords for further scrutiny.