

Law for net zero emissions begins passage through Parliament

I beg to move, that the draft Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019, which was laid before this House on 12 June, be approved.

Mr Speaker, it is an honour to be in the House debating this order less than two weeks after this seminal legislation was tabled in Parliament.

The Statutory Instrument

The draft order before us would amend the 2050 greenhouse gas emissions reduction target in the Climate Change Act from at least 80% to at least 100%.

This target, otherwise known as 'net zero', would constitute a legally binding commitment to end the UK's contribution to climate change.

The case for action

Last year the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change published a sobering report on the impact of global warming at 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

Now in that report they made it clear that a target set to limit global warming at 2°C above pre-industrial levels was no longer enough.

They made it clear that by limiting warming to 1.5°C we may be able to mitigate some of the effects on health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security and economic growth.

They made it clear that countries across the world – including the UK – would need to do more.

The House has heard already of the great progress we have made in tackling climate change together across parties; of how we have cut emissions by 42% since 1990 while growing the economy by 72% (interruption)...

Turning to the Committee on Climate Change's report, the the committee told us quite clearly, that ending the UK's contribution to global warming is now within reach.

They have advised that a net zero emissions target is:

- necessary – because climate change is the single most important issue facing us
- feasible – because we can get there using technologies and approaches which exist now, enabling us to continue to grow our economy, and to

maintain and improve our quality of life

- affordable – because it can be achieved at a cost equivalent to 1-2% of GDP in 2050. Due to falling costs, this is the same cost envelope which this Parliament accepted for an 80% target back. And that's before the many benefits for households and businesses are taken into account – from improved air quality to new green-collar jobs.

And they made it clear that 2050 is the right year for this target and is the appropriate UK contribution to the Paris Agreement – they do not currently consider it credible for the UK to aim to reach net-zero emissions earlier than 2050.

I applaud the Committee on Climate Change for the quality, breadth and analytical rigour of their advice.

Now in recent months and weeks have been a time of huge and growing interest in how we tackle the defining challenge of climate change.

Calls for action have come from all generations and all parts of society – from Greta Thunberg to David Attenborough, from schoolchildren to the Women's Institute.

My message today is that as a Parliament we hear you and we are taking action.

UK Leadership on Climate Change

This country has long been a leader in tackling climate change.

Thirty years ago, Mrs Thatcher was the first global leader to acknowledge at the United Nations "what may be early signs... of man-induced climate change."

And 11 years ago, this House passed the ground-breaking Climate Change Act – the first legislation in the world to set legally binding, long-term targets for reducing emissions.

That Act – passed with strong cross-party support from all sides of the House – created a vital precedent on climate. Listen to the science, focus on the evidence and pursue deliverable solutions.

Today we can make history again as the first major economy in the world to commit to ending our contribution to global warming forever.

I would ask all sides of the House to come together today in the same spirit and support this draft legislation which I commend to the House.