

Press release: PM Theresa May: we will end UK contribution to climate change by 2050

Legislation laid today puts the UK on the path to become the first major economy to set net zero emissions target in law.

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The Prime Minister has today announced that the UK will eradicate its net contribution to climate change by 2050.

The statutory instrument to implement this will be laid in Parliament today, Wednesday 12 June. This will amend the Climate Change Act 2008.

Theresa May will also meet young science and engineering students today to discuss the ambitious new target, which is based on advice from independent experts: the Committee on Climate Change.

The UK already leads the world in tackling climate change, and Government commissioned this advice in October having recognised the need to go even further to limit its effects.

In its report, the Committee on Climate Change forecast significant benefits to public health and savings to the NHS from better air quality and less noise pollution, as well as improved biodiversity.

This legislation will mean that the UK is on track to become the first G7 country to legislate for net zero emissions, with other major economies expected to follow suit. But it is imperative that other major economies follow suit. For that reason, the UK will conduct a further assessment within 5 years to confirm that other countries are taking similarly ambitious action, multiplying the effect of the UK's lead and ensuring that our industries do not face unfair competition.

For the first time, young people will have the chance to shape our future climate policy through the Youth Steering Group. The Group, set up by DCMS and led by the British Youth Council, will advise Government on priorities for environmental action and give a view on progress to date against existing

commitments on climate, waste and recycling, and biodiversity loss. They will start their review in July.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

As the first country to legislate for long-term climate targets, we can be truly proud of our record in tackling climate change. We have made huge progress in growing our economy and the jobs market while slashing emissions.

Now is the time to go further and faster to safeguard the environment for our children. This country led the world in innovation during the Industrial Revolution, and now we must lead the world to a cleaner, greener form of growth.

Standing by is not an option. Reaching net zero by 2050 is an ambitious target, but it is crucial that we achieve it to ensure we protect our planet for future generations.

Whilst it will be for future governments to determine the precise direction of future climate policy, the Committee on Climate Change acknowledge that we have laid strong foundations through our Clean Growth Strategy and taken action to tackle climate change across key sectors of the economy identified by the report.

Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Greg Clark said:

We want to continue our global leadership and that's why we are introducing a legally binding net zero target to end the UK's contribution to global warming entirely by 2050. The report we commissioned from the Committee on Climate Change makes clear that we have laid the foundations to achieve a net zero emissions economy, and that it is necessary and feasible.

Almost 400,000 people are already employed in the low-carbon sector and its supply chains across the country. Through our modern Industrial Strategy we're investing in clean growth to ensure we reap the rewards and create two million high quality jobs by 2030.

The UK is already a centre for clean growth and innovation. Low carbon technology and clean energy contribute £44.5 billion to our economy every year. We are ending the sale of new diesel and petrol cars and vans through our world-leading Road to Zero Strategy, and protecting biodiversity and promoting sustainability through our 25 Year Environment Plan.

Businesses, academics and people across society have endorsed the advice from the Committee on Climate Change. Welcoming the announcement, Dame Carolyn Fairbairn DBE, CBI Director-General, said:

UK business stands squarely behind the Government's commitment to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. This legislation is the right response to the global climate crisis, and firms are ready to play their part in combating it.

Climate leadership can drive UK competitiveness and secure long-term prosperity. This legislation must be followed by a commitment to long-term policies that support decarbonisation across the economy.

Some sectors will need clear pathways to enable investment in low-carbon technologies, and it is vital that there is cross-government coordination on the policies and regulation needed to deliver a clean future.

We will retain the ability to use international carbon credits. Using international credits within an appropriate monitoring, reporting and verification framework is the right thing to do for the planet, allowing the UK to maximise the value of each pound spent on climate change mitigation.

We will continue to work with our international partners to tackle climate change, including through our bid to host COP26.

Press release: Tree Champion reappointed to continue tree planting push

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The Government's Tree Champion Sir William Worsley has today been reappointed to continue his drive to accelerate tree planting rates.

The chair of the National Forest Company was tasked last year with setting a bold direction for the country's forests and woodlands over the next 25 years.

Now Sir William is marking his reappointment with a call to land owners, farmers and foresters across the country to take up the mantle of tree planting by accessing the Government's Woodland Creation Grant Scheme.

Through this fund, which is now open for applications all year round, planting grants of up to £6,800 are available to help landowners realise the benefits of expanding woodland cover.

The creation of a Tree Champion was a key commitment of the Government's flagship [25 Year Environment Plan](#) and since being appointed Sir William has worked with Defra and the Forestry Commission to implement a number of initiatives to grow woodland cover. This includes the £10 million [Urban Tree Challenge Fund](#) which was announced last month and will see 130,00 urban trees planted across England's towns and cities.

Government Tree Champion Sir William Worsley said:

Trees transform our cities, connect us with the outdoors and help to tackle the impacts of our changing climate. That is why I am delighted to be reappointed as the government's Tree Champion so I can continue my drive to ensure future generations enjoy a landscape rooted with trees.

Now I am calling on land owners across the country to help me by taking up our woodland creation grants and tapping into the environmental and economic benefits of planting more trees.

The Tree Champion will continue to push forward the government's ambition to move further and faster on tree planting, with an English Tree Strategy due to be consulted on later this year. He also has already been helping to drive up planting rates in the regions, spearheading the launch of the first [Forestry Investment Zone](#) in Cumbria and launching the [Urban Tree Manual](#) to help local authorities in their decision making.

Earlier this year the government also consulted on a [raft of forestry measures](#) which included proposals to give communities a better say in protecting street trees.

Forestry Minister David Rutley said:

I am happy to reappoint the Tree Champion for another year, and applaud his drive and determination over the past year to champion the importance of our precious woodlands.

The role trees play in combatting climate change and improving our health and wellbeing cannot be underestimated, and I look forward

to continuing to work closely with Sir William Worsley over the coming year.

The Countryside Stewardship Woodland Creation grant is open for applications all year round. Farmers, land managers and foresters are encouraged to submit full applications at least five months before they plan to plant woodland, to give themselves the best chance of receiving an agreement when they need it.

By planting more trees and creating new woodland, landowners in England can help to prevent flood risk and contribute to the sustainability of the wider landscape and provide a range of other ecosystem benefits such as carbon capture, soil conservation and biodiversity.

The government has guaranteed that any agreements where funding has been agreed before the end of 2020 will be funded for their full lifetime, even in a no-deal scenario.

Speech: Focusing on ability, not disability

Distinguished delegates,

The United Kingdom supports persons with disabilities and their empowerment.

We focus on ability, not disability.

Employment provides economic independence, the pride of work and improved wellbeing.

I am proud that under our government the number of persons with disabilities in work has increased by almost 1 million over the last 5 years alone.

And our radical welfare reforms, through Universal Credit, will support more persons with disabilities into work.

This creates huge opportunities for businesses. Having worked in business for much of my life, I can tell you that if you're not recruiting disabled talent, your competitors probably are.

Which is why we have partnered with employers to give them the tools, knowledge and confidence to hire persons with disabilities.

And this has delivered huge success. 11,500 employers have signed up to date and we aim to almost double this to 20,000 by next year.

Not only should businesses be run by persons with disabilities, but they

should be run for them.

So we work with 18 industry leaders who encourage employers to make their sectors accessible and attractive because persons with disabilities should not be on the side lines of society, but our beating heart.

As shown by the world's reaction to the London Paralympic games, where we cheered, celebrated and commiserated along with every single Paralympian involved.

I remember at the Winter Paralympics, 6 years later in South Korea, sharing the joy of the mother of a Paralympian who had just won gold, through a tearful embrace.

I understood the sacrifice, dedication and work that created that moment.

We will remove barriers to enable persons with disabilities to submit themselves for elected office, providing support such as transport and accessible campaign material.

Because political leadership only succeeds when it fully reflects society.

Our Inter-Ministerial Group will co-ordinate actions across Government, and ensure we are implementing the Convention and promoting the human rights of persons with disabilities.

We are removing day-to-day barriers that persons with disabilities face and so investing £300 million to make our railways more accessible.

And we know that assistive technology is life-changing.

We are building on Convention commitments made at our 2018 'Global Disability Summit' by providing assistive technology to 500 million people by 2030, through a new Global Partnership.

We will continue to work with our global partners, businesses and especially persons with disabilities themselves to empower them to meet their limitless potential every single day.

Thank you.