

Caroline Lucas environment stunt: full speech



30 May 2017

Caroline Lucas, Green Party co-leader, today staged an emergency intervention into the General Election campaign to highlight how the environment has been ignored in the national debate so far.

Caroline's full speech to Parliament Square (check against delivery):

Good morning everyone – and thanks so much for coming down here this morning.

We're here to talk about the environment – a topic that has been sorely missing from the General Election campaign so far.

For those of us in the environment movement, the lack of attention doesn't come as much of a surprise.

Despite "the environment" actually meaning the air that we breathe, the water we drink, and the food that we eat: it's rarely talked about in British politics.

It appears that for some, the environment is a secondary concern – something to be considered once we fix (so-called) more important issues.

But nothing could be further from the truth.

Our prosperity depends on the natural world.

It is the ultimate source of everything we make and use – from food and materials, to the air we breathe.

But it is in crisis.

2016 was the hottest year on record – and the targets set in the historic Paris Agreement will be breached within years unless we act fast.

40,000 premature deaths a year are attributable to air pollution, and thousands of children breath in toxic nitrous oxide fumes on their way to school every day.

Our wildlife and nature are in crisis too: 60% of UK species are in long-term decline, whilst 15% are at risk of extinction.

These are just some of the many environmental challenges we face – and they will all be exacerbated by the 'red tape bonfire' that looks set to follow an extreme and dirty Brexit.

Despite these monumental challenges, there is virtually no discussion of them

at all in the general election campaign.

So, today, I have written to Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn to ask them an important question:

Where is your commitment to the environment?

We need to get the natural world back to the heart of this election – not least because of the current approach to it.

Theresa May's Conservative party have been taking donations from big oil, whilst forcing fracking on communities across the UK.

And despite it being a public health emergency, the Tory manifesto mentioned air pollution only once.

Is that really acceptable that after seven years of being dragged through the courts the Government still has no action plan on air quality?

There's not much point in talking about a strong and stable leadership, if we don't have a strong and stable environment.

As for the Labour Party, it has been heartening to see it adopt a more ambitious agenda on climate change.

But it is simply not possible to tackle the climate crisis whilst continuing to support the fossil fuel industry to the tune of £6bn each year.

Or handing out £37bn of taxpayers money to Hinkley Point C – in the full knowledge that wind and solar are now the cheapest way to generate electricity.

That the environment has received such scant attention from both Labour and the Tory's in this election is a shameful and reckless dereliction of the duty they have – not only to the planet- but to future generations, to whom we leave the natural world

Over the last seven years, I'm proud that the Green Party has led the charge in Parliament for environmental protections and action on climate change – and, quite simply, a prosperous, thriving future will be green – or not at all.

From a new Green Investment and Innovation Centre to a new Environment Act, the Green Party has the ideas and policies to create a prosperous, confident and caring Britain.

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ENDS.

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