

Caroline Lucas stages emergency intervention for the environment



30 May 2017

*** Caroline Lucas: "It beggars belief that this election has been almost environment-free when we face an air pollution crisis, a climate denier in the White House, the threat of an extreme Brexit and accelerating climate change"**

*** Lucas asks Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn: 'Where's the environment?'**

*** Photo opportunity: Lucas takes giant Green question mark to Labour HQ, 10 Downing Street and Parliament Square [1]**

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

Lucas and Green Party campaigners will today visit Labour HQ and 10 Downing Street with a giant Green question mark, asking Jeremy Corbyn and Theresa May: "Where is the environment?".

The visits will follow letters sent to Corbyn [2] and May [3] by Lucas, calling on both to reflect the scale of the threat currently facing the environment in the remaining 9 days of their parties' campaigns.

With 2016 the hottest year on record and Britain facing an air pollution crisis, Lucas will call on Corbyn and May to make the General Election a "turning point in history" and put the environment back on the political agenda.

The question mark will then be taken to Parliament Square where Lucas will address campaigners about the importance of the environment.

Caroline Lucas, Green Party co-leader, is expected to say:

"It beggars belief that this election has been almost environment-free when we face an air pollution crisis, the threat of an extreme Brexit and accelerating climate change.

"Environmental protection isn't an optional extra – it must be part of any long term vision for this country's future. But shamefully it's an issue that has been conspicuous by its absence so far in this election campaign – and this has got to change.

"With almost no mention in the leaders debates and glossed over in the manifestos, it's hard to believe any other parties are committed to stopping climate targets slipping further out of reach, cleaning up our air or ending the free-fall in biodiversity.

"We have the chance to make this General Election a turning point in our history, when the UK steps to become a world leader in environmental protection. But to do that we need to put the environment back on the political agenda."

ENDS.

For more information contact: press@greenparty.org.uk / 0203 691 9401

Notes:

1.

Event details:

Date: Tuesday 30 May 2017

10.30am: Photo at Labour HQ

10.50am: Photo at Downing Street

11.10am: Photo and Speech at Parliament Square

Press are invited to join Lucas for a speech at Parliament Square at 11.10am. There will also be photo opportunities before the speech, as Lucas and Green Party campaigners take the giant Green question mark to Labour HQ and 10 Downing Street.

2.

Letter to Jeremy Corbyn:

Dear Jeremy,

I am writing to express alarm and concern at the lack of discussion and debate about the environment in the current election campaign.

The UK's 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 – and we rely on delicate ecological systems to sustain life on earth

– from bees pollinating our crops to trees absorbing carbon dioxide. Building a successful society and economy is not at odds with protecting our environment: it is impossible without it. But, right now, we are destroying the foundations of our economy faster than they can be regenerated: we are eroding the ground we're standing on.

2016 was the hottest year on record, and without urgent action, the world will blow the 1.5 degree threshold set in Paris within years – meanwhile, due to climate change and intensive farming, 60% of UK species are in long-term decline, whilst 15% are at risk of disappearing altogether. The natural world faces a profound threat, and it requires bold and decisive action. That it has received such scant attention in this election is a shameful and reckless failure of the responsibility and duty we have to the natural world.

With regards your manifesto, there were a number of welcome environment announcements – especially on the topic of climate change. Your commitment, for example, to a substantial increase in clean, renewable energy is impressive, but, unfortunately, the Labour Party fails on a number of key issues. If we are serious about the 1.5 degree threshold, we know we must put an end to airport expansion, and, as per our G7 commitment, urgently phase out all fossil fuel subsidies. A serious approach to tackling climate change cannot include handing out vast subsidies to the white elephant that is Hinkley Point C.

Furthermore, and as you know, for the last forty years, the EU has been the bedrock of environmental protections in this country, and Brexit poses a profound risk to many vital protections for wildlife, nature, and human health. We need a new Environment Act, accompanied by a strong regulator and new court, to effectively enforce EU-derived environmental law. Your manifesto hinted at such policies, but did not go far enough – indeed, of the 128 page document, only 2 pages were dedicated to the environment.

I write in the sincere hope that in these last 9 days of the election campaign that we can give the environment the airtime, column inches, and, crucially, the political commitment it deserves – and, with the UK's climate targets slipping further out of reach and biodiversity in free-fall, that we debate these most important issues at a vital turning point in human history.

Yours sincerely,

Caroline Lucas

Parliamentary Candidate for Brighton Pavilion

Co-Leader of the Green Party of England & Wales

3.

Letter to Theresa May:

Dear Theresa,

I am writing to express alarm and concern at the lack of discussion and

debate about the environment in the current election campaign.

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In your manifesto, there was one paltry mention of the air pollution crisis, and no mention of the jaw-dropping cost reductions in renewable energy – meanwhile, fracking will be forced on local communities, whilst the dirty and expensive energy of the past will continue to receive lavish public hand-outs. Furthermore, I echo the concerns of many thousands of people across the UK who believe that the trajectory being set by the Conservative party for an extreme Brexit poses a fundamental threat to the stable and effective mechanisms of environmental protection provided for the European Union. The documents recently leaked to Greenpeace and The Guardian showing UK attempts to weaken vital climate regulations adds weight to those fears.

I write in the sincere hope that in these last 9 days of the election campaign that we can give the environment the airtime, column inches, and, crucially, the political commitment it deserves – and, with the UK's climate targets slipping further out of reach and biodiversity in free-fall, that we debate these most important issues at a vital turning point in human history.

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