

## CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing the world today. It is as much a social and economic threat as it is an ecological one. We all need to do our bit as individuals, in business and in Government and I feel it is paramount that we take measures to tackle climate change now.

Without prompt and significant action we risk causing irreversible damage. The hardest hit will be those areas and populations that have contributed least to the problem and it should be up to the developed nations to lead the way, which is why Conservatives campaigned for the Government to publish a Climate Change Bill.

The Bill has already been strengthened greatly thanks to the efforts of both Opposition benches in the House of Lords and now includes:

- A Principal Aim which is *“to ensure that UK emissions of greenhouse gases do not exceed the level necessary to contribute to limiting the global average temperature increase to not more than 2°C above pre-industrial levels.”*
- The Prime Minister, rather than the Secretary of State for the Environment, must now present the Government’s response to the Committee on Climate Change’s advice and its programme for meeting the carbon budget.
- 70% of emissions reductions must come from domestic effort, with a maximum of 30% allowed to take place outside of the UK
- Rather than just having five yearly budget periods, the Government has now agreed to have indicative annual ranges to act as milestones every year for the budget period.

Regarding the 2020 and 2050 targets, Conservatives believe that this Bill must not legislate for what is politically convenient, *but what is scientifically necessary* to avoid dangerous climate change. I am happy to report that Conservative Members in the House of Lords successfully pushed for our national emissions reduction targets to be set by an independent body of climate experts, the Committee on Climate Change, and not by politicians (while the targets will still be subject to Parliamentary approval).

Conservatives will support, and a Conservative Government will meet, any carbon pollution reduction targets set by the independent Committee.

Fundamental to our approach is the widely accepted scientific opinion that, to avoid dangerous climate change, it will be essential to keep the average global temperature rise to below 2 degrees Celsius. The UK’s long and short term targets for CO<sub>2</sub> reductions should be set at levels which will ensure that we play our part in meeting that objective.

It is perhaps also worth observing the importance of achieving cuts in CO<sub>2</sub> in the near term, in order to set a clear trajectory. In that sense, the 2020 target is perhaps the vital one at this stage.

Please be assured that Conservatives are strongly committed to providing leadership in the fight against climate change, both at home and internationally, and are putting in place policies to deliver a greener, safer society for our children and grandchildren.