

The Environment Council and the Climate Change Bill

The aim of this event and inviting a cross-party panel to address the issue of climate change is to demonstrate the value and necessity of consensus at a political level. Demonstrating agreement beyond party lines on 'the serious and urgent nature of climate change' and effective ways to address it will provide leadership and guidance to all levels of society, domestically and internationally. This example is necessary in order to engage every individual and organisation to participate and contribute to addressing climate change. It is The Environment Council's firm belief that engagement of the public and stakeholders is key to the success of the climate change bill.

The Environment Council is a charity dedicated to bringing together a diversity of stakeholders and interests to reach the most collaborative and sustainable decisions on environmental issues. Our work on climate change ranges from has covered renewable energy, nuclear energy, transport, regeneration and development and waste.

This depth and breadth of experience has shown us that engagement is an effective, robust way to achieve jointly owned and implemented solutions and is especially necessary on an issue like climate change, which will require a multitude of approaches.

We applaud the UK's leadership in this area, and the introduction of formal legislation to support it. However, whilst the Bill is a strong legislative tool, the key to its success will be the successful delivery of its targets. Crucially, addressing climate change will require the support and decisive action of the public and stakeholders, and we believe our work can make a significant contribution to this process through:

- ▶ Engagement as a means of gaining buy-in and collective action from all sectors of society
- ▶ Promoting a balanced, participative approach to decision-making, especially on issues such as the UK's energy mix
- ▶ Involving stakeholders such as industry, government, user groups and the public in determining the best ways to implement efficiency measures in the home and workplace

The Environment Council will be submitting a formal response to the Draft Climate Change Bill consultation and, given the nature of this issue, urge all individuals and organisations to contribute to the formation of this legislation in order to achieve the most effective, collaborative and sustainable approach to this issue. See the defra website: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/climatechange-bill/> to find out more.

Background to the Climate Change Bill

The Climate Change Bill is the first of its type in the world and has been widely welcomed for demonstrating UK leadership on this challenge, and for introducing a clear, credible long-term domestic framework to tackle climate change and achieve UK emissions targets.

The Bill provides a framework for reducing carbon dioxide emissions and ensures steps are taken towards adapting to the impacts of climate change through four elements:

- 1. Setting targets in statute and carbon budgeting.** Carbon 'budgets' or emissions limits will be set over five year periods (starting in 2008) and for periods of at least 15 years ahead. This is intended to provide flexibility and certainty by making 60% emissions reduction by 2050 a binding target.
- 2. Establishing a Committee on Climate Change.** An independent body will be established to advise Government how to reduce emissions over time and across the economy, recommending carbon budget levels and the best ways to achieve emissions targets by 2050.
- 3. Creating enabling powers.** The Bill proposes new powers to enable Government to introduce domestic emissions trading schemes and increase the range of policy options Government can use.
- 4. Reporting requirements.** The Committee on Climate Change will have an annual role in reporting to Parliament on progress towards carbon budgets and Parliament will be obliged to respond formally. Reporting will improve monitoring and increase transparency and accountability.