



**Friends of
the Earth**



Big Ask. Big Month. Big Lobby.

Factsheet for contacting your MP

In a nutshell

The Big Ask campaign is calling for a Climate Change Bill that would commit the Government to year on year cuts in carbon dioxide emissions. Over the past year over 100,000 people have contacted their MP to ask them to show their support for the Bill.

For the last twelve months we have been asking MPs to sign Early Day Motion 178 (a kind of parliamentary petition) to show their support. 397 MPs have so far signed, you can find out if yours is one of them here: <http://edmi.parliament.uk/EDMi/EDMDetails.aspx?EDMID=28373&SESSION=875>

Recently we have been asking people to take part in the Big Ask, Big Month, Big Lobby. Hundreds of people have risen to the challenge by visiting their MP in person to ask *“Please will you write to Tony Blair and David Miliband (the Environment Minister) to ask for a Climate Change Bill to be in the Queen’s Speech”*.

Nearly every single MP across the country has been contacted in person by at least one constituent. However, the Queen’s Speech takes place on 15 November, so any pressure you can put on your MP before that date would be very helpful. The more constituents who show they are concerned, the more likely your MP is to take action.

Personal letters and phone calls all make a big difference.

Contacting your MP

You can find out who your MP is and how to contact them either by ringing the House of Commons Information Office on 020 7219 4272 or at this website: <http://www.upmystreet.com/commons//>

What to say?

These are points you may want to make (or that may be useful):

- *I’m one of your constituents and I want to let you know that I am very worried about climate change.*
- *I’m not an expert, but I understand that we need to make big cuts in greenhouse gases, especially carbon dioxide, in the near future.*
- *I’m supporting Friends of the Earth’s call for the Government to introduce a new climate change law which would mean that the UK’s emissions would have to reduce by around 3 per cent each year.*

- *I can see that introducing a law would give business a clear message to invest in cleaner technologies, as well as making sure that all parts of government do their bit to help emissions reductions.*
- *All I'm asking of you is that you write to Tony Blair and David Miliband (Environment Secretary), to ask them to include a climate change bill in the Queen's Speech. [If you can't do that could you at least write to them saying that one of your constituents wanted you to write to ask for this?] Please could you send me a copy of the letter, my address is.....*

These following points may also be useful:

- *I understand that although the Government is going to meet its Kyoto Protocol emissions targets, scientists are now saying that greater emissions reductions are needed.*
- *I have read that if you include emissions from international aviation, UK emissions of carbon dioxide are the same as they were in 1990, and in fact although emissions fell between 1990 and 1997 emissions have risen again since then.*
- *I know that both David Cameron (Conservatives) and Ming Campbell (Liberal Democrats) have said that a climate change bill should be introduced, and that in his conference speech Tony Blair said that emissions should be reduced step by step.*

If you receive a verbal or postal response from your MP, we would be interested to see it. Please forward it to: **The Big Ask, Friends of the Earth, 26-28 Underwood Street, London, N1 7JQ**

More on the Climate Change Bill

The idea behind this Bill is to set a target for cutting emissions by 3 per cent each year, to force Ministers to report on progress annually and give new powers to Parliament to make sure we stay on track. At the minute our targets are so long term that Ministers aren't really under any pressure to meet them, that's why emissions are rising at the moment and not falling.

If I ring my MP will I have to talk to my MP or just leave a message?

It is most likely you will talk to an assistant/secretary but it is not impossible your MP will simply answer the phone. Ideally you should ask if it is possible to talk to your MP, and if so arrange a convenient time. You might also get an answerphone – if so, please do leave a very brief message saying “I was calling to ask you to write to the Prime Minister urging him to include a Climate Change Bill in the Queen's Speech. I would like to speak to you about this if that is possible – please call me back on

Can I write/email/fax instead?

You can, of course, but a phone call would be better. We need to show that there is real momentum behind this Bill, and we think they will be particularly impressed if they get a few phone calls to build on the many letters, postcards and emails they have already received.

Isn't this a bit scary?

The vast majority of MPs are very friendly and keen to hear from their constituents. They know that they need their constituents to like them otherwise they will not get voted in. In the rare cases where they are abrupt or rude it is worth saying to them that you are calling them because you care about climate change, no one paid you to do this you did it because you care.

It is possible that they say they don't support the idea of a climate change bill (most MPs do, as does the leadership in the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats) which is their prerogative, but they should be happy to pass your concerns on to the Prime Minister and Environment Secretary.

Thanks very much for your help, together we can make the world of difference.