Briefing

Energy: turning up the heat on your MP

Friends of the Earth, January 2013

Our energy system is in a mess. The UK gets three-quarters of its electricity from dirty fossil fuels, contributing to dangerous climate change and leaving households exposed to sudden rises in gas prices. Meanwhile, our leaky homes waste huge amounts of energy – costing us money, leaving many people cold and in fuel poverty, and needlessly increasing carbon emissions.

We need to rapidly change where we get our energy from, and how much of it we use. And that’s why we need people to turn up the heat on their MPs, to get them to fix our broken energy system.

What’s more, we’ve got a fantastic opportunity right now: the Government has just introduced its new Energy Bill into Parliament. It’s a critical moment that will determine the future of our energy supply for the next generation, and is the most crucial piece of climate change legislation this Parliament.

Friends of the Earth are calling on the Government to overhaul the UK’s energy system in two key ways

1. **Introduce a target into the new Energy Bill to take carbon out of our electricity by 2030.** The Energy Bill fails to set the clear direction needed to decarbonise the UK’s electricity. Investors also need long-term certainty if they’re to found businesses and build factories in Britain, and bring more green jobs to our shores. We are working with MPs from all parties to get an amendment tabled as the Bill is debated that will put a 2030 decarbonisation target at its heart – cleaning up our power and generating more green jobs for Britain. See the following briefing for further information: [www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/report_stage_briefing.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/report_stage_briefing.pdf)

2. **Tackle energy waste, cut bills and reduce fuel poverty through a huge energy efficiency programme – paid for by recycling carbon taxes.** Friends of the Earth, as part of a huge coalition of health, consumer and children’s groups, is calling for the Government to use the future revenue it will receive from carbon tax to boost spending on large-scale energy efficiency schemes. (A household is defined as being fuel poor if it spends more than 10% of its income on fuel for adequate heating.) It is
estimated that the Treasury will receive on average £4bn annually on average from carbon taxes over the next 15 years. If this is re-invested in energy efficiency it could take 9 out of 10 households out of fuel poverty. For more information, see www.energybillrevolution.org.uk

There are lots of MPs who already back these proposals – but there are many more who need to be convinced. If we get enough MPs on board, we can push the Government into making the changes needed. So even if you've never dreamt of lobbying your MP before – please consider doing so on this.

What you can do to lobby your MP

Lobbying an MP might seem daunting at first, but it's only right that our elected representatives listen to the public's concerns! There are lots of ways you can bend the ear of your MP…

If you've got two minutes

- Email them, asking them to support the above proposals. Friends of the Earth has a current email action which you can take to contact your MP, here: www.cleanbritishenergy.co.uk.

If you've got ten minutes

- Write them a letter. We have template letters which you can personalise. You can also send the letter to the local paper. We can provide contact details if needed.

If you've got half an hour

- Attend your MP's local surgery – most MPs hold meetings for constituents at the end of each week. Check your MP's website for details. We can provide you with a template press release that you can send to your local paper, explaining that your MP is being questioned on this subject and its relevance to your local area.

If you've got some more time

- Hold a public meeting, and invite your MP along – put them on the spot! It can be a great idea to take photos of you meeting your MP, and write it up for the local paper – putting your MP's commitments onto the public record. Friends of the Earth can help you with organising a meeting, provide speakers and assist with follow-up media work.

- Arrange a ‘show-and-tell’ event with a local green business. The green economy is employing increasing numbers of people. Why not show your MP that there are green jobs at stake in your local area by linking up with green businesses – such as a solar installation company or insulation firm – and arranging a workplace visit? You could also invite local media. Friends of the Earth can help you locate local green businesses and assist with media work.

If you'd like help, and a full guide on how to lobby your MP, contact Friends of the Earth: howard.whitehead@foe.co.uk 020 7566 4083.