



Environment Manifesto

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Policies to protect nature and fight
climate change
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Foreword



Liberal Democrats believe passionately in protecting the environment and fighting climate change.

Every parent wants their child to continue to be able to breathe clean air and swim in clean water. Our generation will have failed in its duty to the next if we pass on a world scarred by rising temperatures and extreme weather.

But tackling climate change and improving our environment is not just our moral duty. It makes hard-headed economic sense, too. The UK is now a world leader in the green economy – with huge potential for further growth.

I am immensely proud of the Liberal Democrats' record in government. Led by a Liberal Democrat Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, we have faced down climate sceptics inside and outside government. We have fought tooth and nail to ensure this has been the greenest government ever.

In the last five years we have encouraged growth in green industries, established the world's first Green Investment Bank, and almost trebled the percentage of UK electricity produced from renewable sources. Together, these measures have helped us reduce the UK's carbon footprint.

We've also protected the natural world – with stronger protections

on National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. We have planted a million trees in the most ambitious planting programme since the 1970s and introduced a 5p charge on plastic bags that cause so much environmental devastation.

And we understand that Britain can't fight climate change alone. Liberal Democrats are instinctively internationalist and look to work collaboratively on global problems. Thanks to our leadership in Europe, the EU has agreed to at least a 40% cut in carbon emissions by 2030.

In government again, we will go even further.

As this document sets out, our five green laws will stimulate more innovation in the green economy, including investment in sustainable transport; ensure all new homes are zero carbon; reduce household waste and make the UK a zero-carbon country within a generation.

These five green laws appear on the front page of our manifesto – indicating clearly that they will be our priority to deliver in the next parliament.

Environmentalism has been central to Liberal Democrat beliefs for a generation. And any government with Liberal Democrats in it will have to stay true to these values.

A stronger economy needs to embrace the technology of the future and invest in energy sources that are sustainable, reliable and renewable.

A fairer society will protect nature and hand on a healthy planet to the next generation.

Only the Liberal Democrats will fight for a stronger economy and a fairer society, with the environment at its heart.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nick Clegg". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style with a long horizontal stroke at the bottom.

Nick Clegg
**Leader of the
Liberal Democrats**



Protecting nature

Liberal Democrats are the only major party that takes seriously the responsibility of protecting our precious natural environment.

The value of connecting millions of people with our natural surroundings is worth much more than money. It's critical to health, wellbeing and our sense of community. Even in cash terms, short-term profits from exploiting the environment carry a longer-term penalty in squandered resources, clear-up costs and the adverse impact on health.

We will ensure that protecting the natural environment becomes a core commitment of every government department and agency. Our Nature Act will bring together policies and action on forest, rivers, land, minerals, and oceans.

We will:

- ◆ Put the Natural Capital Committee (NCC) on a statutory footing, set natural capital targets, including on biodiversity, clean air and water, and empower the NCC to recommend actions to meet these targets.
- ◆ Significantly increase the amount of accessible green space. We will complete the coastal path, introduce a fuller Right to Roam and create a new designation of National Nature Parks to protect up to a million acres of accessible green space valued by local communities.

- ◆ Place the management of public forests on a sustainable footing, in line with the recommendations of the Independent Panel on Forestry. By 2020 we will be planting an extra tree for every child born.
- ◆ Require the government to set out a 25-year plan for recovering nature, with annual updates to Parliament, including how to reverse the decline of UK species and their habitats, ensuring bees and other insects can fulfil their important role as crop pollinators.
- ◆ Tackle wildlife and environmental crime with increased enforcement of environmental regulations by all relevant authorities and higher penalties to ensure environmental crime is not a financial risk worth taking.
- ◆ Improve UK enforcement of the EU Birds and Habitats Directive.
- ◆ Designate an ecologically coherent network of marine protected areas with appropriate management by 2020.
- ◆ Encourage the uptake of water metering, including introducing it in all defined water-stressed areas by 2025 coupled with national social tariffs to protect low income households.

Investment, skills and growth

New world markets are developing in low-carbon and resource efficient technologies. Britain's real strengths in sectors like offshore wind power and low-carbon vehicles and in green finance make us well placed to compete. We must make sure green industries can reach their full potential.

We will:

- ◆ Increase research and development and commercialisation support in four key low-carbon technologies where Britain could lead the world: tidal power, carbon capture and storage, energy storage and ultra-low emission vehicles.
- ◆ Give full borrowing powers to the Green Investment Bank to boost further investment in low-carbon technology.
- ◆ Grow the market for green products and services with steadily higher green criteria in public procurement policy, extending procurement requirements more widely through the public sector including to the NHS and Academy schools. In particular we will deliver ambitious reductions in energy use in the public sector.
- ◆ Encourage the creation of green financial products to bring consumer capital into green industries.
- ◆ Develop National Colleges as national centres of expertise where there is demand and an identified need, such as renewable

energy, to deliver the high level vocational skills that businesses need in these areas.

- ◆ Ensure UK Trade and Investment and UK Export Finance can prioritise support for key sectors identified in our Industrial Strategy, including exports of green products and technologies, and press for higher environmental standards for export credit agencies throughout the OECD.

The economy and tax

We will improve the way government handles the cross-cutting challenges of delivering green growth and fighting climate change, establishing a senior Cabinet Committee to bring together inter-departmental actions on issues like air quality and resource management. To finish the job of balancing the books, we will use taxes on the wealthiest, on banks and big business and on polluters.

We will:

- ◆ Help incentivise sustainable behaviour by increasing the proportion of tax revenue accounted for by green taxes.
- ◆ Establish an Office for Environmental Responsibility to scrutinise the government's efforts to meet its environmental targets, replicating the success of the Office for Budget Responsibility.
- ◆ Commission the Natural Capital Committee to investigate the potential for other resource taxes, including deposit refund schemes.
- ◆ Establish a low-carbon transition fund using 50% of any tax revenues from shale gas to fund energy efficiency, community energy, low-carbon innovation and renewable heat.

Energy and emissions

Our plans are working for a low-carbon economy at the lowest cost for consumers.

Reforms achieved by Liberal Democrats in Government have already created the world's first low-carbon electricity market and will stimulate up to 250,000 green jobs across the UK by 2020.

While energy demand has fallen year on year (2.5%) and renewable electricity generation has almost trebled, we need to go further and faster to meet our goal of reducing energy demand by 50% by 2030. We want to be ambitious in our support for the

important role renewable energy, energy efficiency and other safe and sustainable low-carbon technologies play. We have already introduced the most robust regulatory regime for unconventional gas, including banning drilling in National Parks.

Cutting harmful emissions and decarbonising our economy is part of the solution to our economic and wider challenges, as well as being a moral imperative. Our Zero Carbon Britain Act will green our electricity, and be monitored and audited by the Climate Change Committee.

We will:

- ◆ Pass a Zero Carbon Britain Act to set a new legally binding target to bring net greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2050.
- ◆ Set a 2030 power sector decarbonisation target of 50-100g per kWh, as recommended by the CCC, with an indicative target of 60% of electricity from renewable sources by 2030.
- ◆ Regulate to end the use of unabated coal in electricity generation by 2025 and require any new gas stations built after 2030 to be fitted with Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) technology.
- ◆ Expand community energy, building on Britain's first ever community energy strategy.

Housing, buildings and energy efficiency

We have made huge advances in this Parliament, increasing standards for newly built homes, and improving the energy efficiency of more than a million homes in just two years. Warming our homes is an essential part of the fight against climate change. In the next Parliament, we will go further, ensuring at least four million homes are improved by 2020, not only lowering bills and helping to tackle the scourge of fuel poverty, but generating jobs too.

Our Green Buildings Act will:

- ◆ Set new energy efficiency targets, including a long-term ambition for every home to reach at least an energy rating of Band C by 2035.
- ◆ Act to tackle fuel poverty, ensuring all low-income homes are brought up to Band C by 2027, with continued support for the Green Deal Communities programme, enabling local Councils to provide help street by street.
- ◆ Remove exemptions in the Zero Carbon Standard for new homes, increasing the standard steadily and extending it to non-domestic



buildings from 2019.

- ◆ Include ambitious targets for all social and private rented homes to reach a Band C EPC rating by 2027.
- ◆ Give everyone who significantly improves the energy efficiency of their home £100 off their Council Tax each year for 10 years and create a new Feed Out Tariff to reward people who install solid wall insulation.
- ◆ Reduce heat and energy use through new government regulatory powers.

Transport and air quality

Our approach to transport integrates innovation, regulation, greener vehicles and transport choices, and town and city planning. We will pass a Green Transport Act including a National Air Quality Plan, dramatically improving Britain's air quality by 2020.

We will:

- ◆ Create new Low Emission Zones including legal requirements for our most polluted towns and cities, that cut transport-related pollution and encourage walking and cycling.
- ◆ Support ambitious EU vehicle emission standards, and reform Vehicle Excise Duty to drive continuous reductions in greenhouse gas and other pollutants from the UK car fleet.
- ◆ Help bus companies trade in older more polluting buses and

coaches for newer ones helping develop the market for low-carbon buses.

- ◆ Encourage the market for electric vehicles, with early requirements for the use of low emission vehicles in the public sector.
- ◆ Include a statutory target of 2030 by which time all major, regularly used rail routes will need to be electrified.
- ◆ Require every new bus and taxi to be Ultra Low Emission from 2030, and every car on the road to meet that standard by 2040.
- ◆ Implement the recommendations of the Get Britain Cycling report, allowing greater investment in bike lanes, high-volume secure bike parking, and road safety measures to keep cyclists safe.
- ◆ Ensure our airport infrastructure meets the needs of a modern and open economy, without allowing emissions from aviation to undermine our goal of a Zero Carbon Britain by 2050, including no net increase in runways across the UK.

Adapting to climate change

The environment underpins everything, from the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat, to the resources and energy we use and the waste we produce. We need a healthy environment for a healthy society and healthy economy.

The devastating floods experienced over the past few years are a sign of accelerating climate change, exacerbated by changing patterns of land use. We will prepare a national resilience plan to help the UK economy, national infrastructure and natural resources adapt to the likely impacts of a 3° or 4°C global average temperature rise.

We will:

- ◆ Continue to push for reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, ensuring farming support is concentrated on sustainable food production, conservation and tackling climate change.
- ◆ Implement programmes to help farmers and other land users adapt to climate change impacts including protecting soil and forest carbon sinks, encouraging planning in uplands and restoring flood plains.
- ◆ Work with local government to review the governance of flood risk and land drainage, and introduce high standards for flood resilience for buildings and infrastructure in flood risk areas.

Resource efficiency

Britain has a real opportunity to lead the way in generating sustainable prosperity and jobs that combines minimising waste, maximising reuse and recycling, and building more resilience into our resources, infrastructure and economy. Doing more with less makes economic and environmental sense. We need policies which help us to live within the planet's environmental limits.

Our Resource Efficiency and Zero Waste Britain Act will include:

- ◆ Commissioning a 'Stern Report' on resource efficiency which will be conducted by the Natural Capital Committee (NCC).
- ◆ Tasking the NCC with recommending legally binding targets for reducing the consumption of natural resources, and introduce incentives for businesses to improve resource efficiency.
- ◆ Increased penalties for waste crimes.
- ◆ Statutory recycling targets of 70% of waste in England.
- ◆ Regulation to promote design of products or parts that can be repaired, reused and recycled.

International action on climate change and the environment

Pollution does not respect national borders, and wildlife and ecosystems are not constrained by political boundaries. That's why the Liberal Democrats will tackle the challenges of climate change and deforestation on an international basis.

We are committed to remaining part of the EU, working for reform and modernisation. That way we will make sure our voice is heard, and can cooperate with other European countries to address environmental threats and tackle climate change.

At the 2015 UN Climate Conference, we will work to secure a binding global agreement on cutting emissions.

We will:

- ◆ Push for a stronger commitment within the EU to a 50% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 with greater use of EU funds to support low-carbon investments.
- ◆ Work with regulatory bodies and financial investors to establish a global reporting standard for fossil fuel companies on the potential impact of future restrictions on carbon emissions on their asset base.
- ◆ Provide greater resources for international environmental



cooperation, particularly on actions to tackle illegal trade in timber, wildlife and fish.

- ◆ Argue for an EU and global target of halting net global deforestation by 2020 – including supporting better forest law enforcement and governance and sustainable agriculture, closing loopholes in the EU Timber Regulation and ensuring that by 2020 only legal and sustainable timber products can be sold in the UK.
- ◆ Ensure UK and EU development aid, free trade and investment agreements support environmental goals and sustainable investment, including maintaining the UK's International Climate Fund and supporting direct bilateral programmes with developing countries on climate change.
- ◆ Create a one million square kilometre southern Atlantic Ocean reserve.
- ◆ Push for the creation of a marine nature reserve in the Arctic Ocean, promote the highest possible environmental standards for UK companies operating in the region and press for a ban on EU-flagged vessels undertaking industrial fishing in the previously unfished areas of the Arctic.



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