



Department  
for Education



Department for  
Business, Energy  
& Industrial Strategy

All MPs  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

**Chris Skidmore MP**  
Minister of State for Energy and Clean  
Growth

1 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0ET

+44 (0) 20 7215 5000  
[www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus)  
[enquiries@beis.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@beis.gov.uk)

[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

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*Dear Colleagues,*

## **A NET ZERO TARGET FOR THE UK**

I write to you at a time when the threat of climate change has seized public attention like never before. We have heard calls from all parts of society for countries across the world to raise their ambition in tackling this profound threat to our way of life – from schoolchildren to business leaders, scientists and faith leaders.

There is no doubt that climate change is one of the most profound global challenges we face.

In October last year, we commissioned advice from our independent advisors, the Committee on Climate Change on whether our current target – to reduce the UK's greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% relative to 1990 levels by 2050 – is enough. They responded last month, and we have given their advice careful consideration.

**I am pleased to confirm that we have today laid draft legislation to set a new net zero greenhouse gas emissions target for the UK, to be delivered by 2050. This world-leading target will bring to an end our contribution to climate change.**

This makes us one of the first major economies to legislate for net zero emissions. This reflects our global leadership to date – which Members and parties from across the House have played a vital role in delivering.

Eleven years ago, we were the first country in the world to set legally binding long term targets to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. We have shown leadership in our delivery of emissions reductions – most recently, through the first coal-free fortnight on our power system since the industrial revolution. The action we are taking today will both continue this proud tradition of climate leadership and act as a rallying cry to other countries to raise their ambition to tackle this global issue for the benefit of generations to come.

The CCC's report shows that this goal is now feasible, deliverable, and can be met within the same cost as was estimated for our current target when it was set back in 2008. Since setting the Act we have been on a journey – from the Paris Agreement in 2015, to our commitment in 2016 to set a net zero target, to the Clean Growth Strategy in 2017, to our offer to host COP 26 earlier this year and to the introduction of legislation to set a net zero 2050 target today.

We have already shown the world that with our world-leading scientists, business leaders and innovators, it is possible to cut emissions whilst growing the economy. Between 1990 and 2017, the UK reduced its emissions by over 40% while growing the economy by more than two thirds.

We have set out strong frameworks for delivery in the Clean Growth Strategy and our modern Industrial Strategy, and the transition to a net zero economy presents opportunities to build on the strengths we have already developed in areas such as offshore wind, smart systems and green finance, creating high-value green jobs and new business opportunities across the country. We already have almost 400,000 jobs in the low carbon economy and its supply chain, and by one estimate this could grow to 2 million jobs in 2030. And we will engage businesses and the public in the transition – Green GB Week returns on 4 November for another week of green action to showcase the benefits, opportunities and challenges of driving clean growth.

Climate change is the most serious environmental challenge we face. Only by working together can we tackle it. I am grateful for colleagues' support to date and pay tribute to Members from across the House for the leadership they have shown in pressing for more ambitious action. I look forward to working with you in ending our contribution to global warming – and seizing the benefits of a zero-emission economy for people and communities across the UK.

Yours be,  


**CHRIS SKIDMORE MP**