

Priorities for tackling climate change and ending poverty in the Energy Bill

Joint civil society statement

The UK is facing the climate crisis alongside one of the greatest economic crises of this generation, a crisis driven in large part by volatile fossil fuel markets. This long-standing market volatility is being exacerbated by the geopolitical insecurity from the catastrophic conflict in Ukraine. The current wholesale price of gas is already putting huge pressure on the already stretched incomes of millions of people across the UK - through rising prices and spiralling bills - and this is only set to get worse. The Energy Bill to be announced today offers a real opportunity to start to turn the tide on this crisis, building out cheap, clean energy, and taking simple, effective steps to make warming our homes affordable.

Insulate homes

The simplest, most cost effective route to reducing our reliance on global gas markets would be to embark upon a nationally funded locally led programme of insulating every home in the UK. This country wastes an enormous amount of energy because the housing stock is so poor. Taking a street by street approach, working with local authorities, the government could lift millions of people out of fuel poverty. This Bill could help kickstart that process through introducing tougher rules for building warmer, cheaper to run homes, clear deadlines for housing stock improvements and clean heat delivery and locking in the ambition for ending fuel poverty.

Unlock clean energy

Renewable energy is now by far the cheapest way to generate electricity. Indeed, the UK's leadership in offshore wind is already shielding consumers from expensive gas. Now more than ever we need to double down on the potential of cheap renewables to reduce all our energy bills. New onshore renewables are six times cheaper than the cost of running gas plants.

The Energy Bill should reform the power market to decouple household energy prices from gas prices, unlock the power of the planning system and local energy markets to support communities to build onshore wind and solar, and ensure our ambition on offshore wind can be delivered through planning and by creating an effective, nature-positive marine grid.

Build a flexible, digital grid

The energy system is changing by the day, with new technologies, often more rooted in local communities, creating a more resilient decentralised grid. We need to embrace that change in the Energy Bill ensuring the rules of the system work for new clean technologies, for people and for the planet. Locking net zero into the remit, in law, of the energy regulator Ofgem and new System Operator would be a simple and effective way to make sure this is the last fossil fuel driven crisis the UK ever faces.

End our reliance on expensive fossil fuels

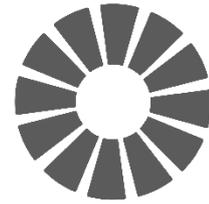
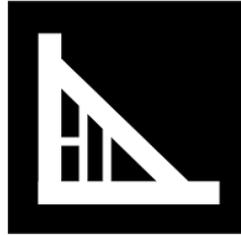
Despite the rhetoric from the oil and gas lobby, we have yet to see a single piece of evidence that further licensing either in the North Sea or through fracking would increase UK energy security or lower bills. The Energy Bill is a chance to formally end the fossil fuel era by

legislating for a fully decarbonised power grid and putting hard targets on what future 'flexible capacity' and clean energy storage will be, and how it will be delivered.

Protect the most vulnerable

There is no short term silver bullet to the current energy crisis, but if we act now to insulate homes and build out clean energy, we can ensure that over the coming winters, we start to protect those on the frontline of this crisis from falling further into poverty. This Bill is not the vehicle to unlock the financial support needed for the elderly, young families and the vulnerable, but that support must be unlocked urgently.





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Full list of signatories:

Greenpeace, RSPB, The Wildlife Trusts, Friends of the Earth, Nesta, Ember, Oxfam Great Britain, WWF UK, Green Alliance, Groundwork, End Fuel Poverty Coalition, MCS Charitable Foundation, CPRE The countryside charity, Climate Cymru, Welsh Centre for International Affairs, Energy Local CIC, Community Energy South, Chartered Institute of Housing, OVESCO, Positive Money, Autonomy, Regen, Uplift, Power for People, Centre for Alternative Technology, The Centre for Local Economic Strategies, Women's Budget Group, Equality Trust, Community Energy England, 38 Degrees, Possible, UK100

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