

VICKY FORD MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Thank you for writing to me in relation to concerns around climate change and the environment. It is good to know how important these issues are to you. I am pleased that we have a shared interest in this area.

The science is very clear. Climate Change is a real risk to our planet's future. We cannot continue adding further emissions of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere.

It is clear that tackling climate change is at the forefront of many people's minds. I am pleased this is being taken extremely seriously by the Government. There have been great strides forward, I recognise that there is much more to do and the urgency of going even further is vital.

Working with the Climate Change Committee, Government is taking expert advice on the best way to achieve net zero emissions across the economy. Many MPs have pushed for this with strong support from their constituencies.

I am sponsoring the Climate Change (Net Zero UK Carbon Account) Bill in Parliament to require the Government to commit to a "net zero" carbon account by 2050. As a member of the Science and Technology Select Committee, I am also working on a in depth enquiry into developing technologies in order to meet Clean Growth emissions reduction targets.



To date, the following has been achieved:

- The UK has reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 25% since 2010, faster than any other G20 country.
- The UK was the first country to commit to phase out electricity generation through unabated coal. This will happen by 2025.
- The UK has invested £52 billion in renewable energy since 2010 with 400,000 people now working in low Carbon businesses.
- 2018 was the cleanest and greenest year with renewable resources supplying a third of our electricity, up from just over 6% in 2009.
- The Government has established the International Climate Fund (ICF) to provide £5.8 billion to help the world's poorest countries adapt to climate change and promote cleaner, greener economic growth.
- The Government is encouraging Greener Homes by bringing an end to fossil fuel heating systems in all new houses by 2025 and ensuring new housing developments deliver environmental improvements locally and nationally by using the 'net-environmental gain principle.'

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In addition, the Chancellor announced a whole range of measures in the recent Spring Statement. Foremost is a new global review to assess the economic value of biodiversity globally so we know what action is needed to take to restore our precious environment which has suffered such a catastrophic decline in recent decades.

This could do for the Environment what the Stern Report did for Climate Change. In addition, we will enhance environmental standards through the forthcoming Environment Bill and establish a world-leading, green governance body – the Office for Environmental Protection – to uphold environmental legislation.

Government support has helped drive down the cost of renewable energy. Solar has seen costs fall by 35 per cent in the last three years. I believe that support should help low-cost, low-carbon technologies to stand on their own two feet, rather than create dependence on public subsidies, which ultimately drive bills up for consumers.

Furthermore, work is continuing to tackle poor air quality through the Clean Air Strategy; including banning petrol and diesel cars by 2040, and investing millions in greener public transport, electric and hydrogen vehicles and battery technology.

In addition to the work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the Government has also taken many other environmental measures including:

- Banning plastic microbeads in personal care and cosmetic products; these include face scrubs, soaps, toothpaste and shower gels. Just one shower was sending 100,000 microbeads down the drain and into the ocean, causing serious harm to marine life).
- Ban on plastic straws, stirrers and cotton buds and a deposit return scheme for single-use plastics that is underway and subject to consultation.
- Introducing a 5p charge on single-use plastic bags: This has reduced their use by 85% - with each person on average now using 25 bags a year compared to 140 before the charge came into effect.
- Doubling the maximum fine for littering to £150: For the first time, local authorities can also use these littering penalties against vehicle owners if it can be proved litter was thrown from their car.
- New Resources & Waste strategy: This will end confusion over recycling and tackle problem packaging. The Government is working on new labelling systems for plastics to give much clearer advice to consumers on which products are more readily recyclable. The Government is also introducing new 'polluter pays' policies including a Producer Tax on plastic which will ensure manufacturers and retailers are held responsible for the amount of plastic they produce.
- Create a Northern Forest from Liverpool to Hull with the aim of planting 50 million trees over 25 years: Spanning more than 120 miles between the cities of Bradford, Leeds, Manchester and Liverpool, the proposed Northern Forest will help boost habitats for woodland birds and bats and protect iconic species such as the red squirrel.

- Securing extra protection for precious Ancient Woodland and veteran trees: New planning rules have at last given ancient trees and woods the highest possible protection from development.
- Protecting our bees and other pollinators by helping secure an EU-wide ban on neonicotinoids pesticides: The UK voted in favour of the proposals that will see a ban on outdoor use of three neonicotinoids - Clothianidin, Imidacloprid and Thiamethoxam.
- Creating 41 new Marine Conservation Zones around the UK: Safeguarding almost 12,000 square kilometres of marine habitats and marking the most significant expansion of the UK's 'Blue Belt' of protected areas to date.
- Internationally protecting marine habitats with a Blue Belt to protect an area the size of India, including recently protecting 4m sq. kms of pristine waters around Ascension Island.

I hope you will agree that the Government is demonstrating a genuine commitment to leaving the Environment in a better state than we found it. Whilst many positive steps have been taken, I realise there is much more to do and the urgency of addressing this has certainly been stressed to me by many individuals and groups that I have met with. It may seem that Parliamentarians are solely focused on Brexit, but rest assured, I understand this message which is so important for future generations and MPs are working tirelessly to highlight Britain's leading role in tackling Climate Change. Climate Change has no boundaries and it is important that it is tackled worldwide. I shall continue to work on this agenda and please continue to share your thoughts and ideas with me.

With kind regards,

Audrey Ford