

14 August 2024

Dear all Members of Parliament,

Re: Climate and Nature Bill

We, a group of climate scientists, conservationists, ecologists, health professionals and others, are writing to ask for your help to ensure that the UK can rise to the challenge of our times.

We are acutely aware of the existential threat that humanity faces from climate change and the loss of nature. July 2024 was the thirteenth consecutive month where [global temperatures reached 1.5°C](#) above pre-industrial averages. There are more than 163,000 species on the [IUCN Red List](#), with more than 45,300 species threatened with extinction, including 41% of amphibians, 26% of mammals and 12% of birds. We have also [crossed six of nine planetary boundaries](#)—the safe operating spaces for humanity—and breaching these limits increases the risk of generating large-scale, abrupt or irreversible environmental changes. Around the world, climate-driven droughts, flooding, heat waves and wildfires are commonplace and are making life intolerable for millions of people.

You may feel that these issues seem far from our shores, but nothing could be further from the truth. The UK is [one of the most nature-depleted nations](#) on Earth. Pollution is ruining the waters we drink and swim in, the air we breathe, and the soil we depend on for nutrition. The loss of nature is impacting your constituents' health and the free delivery of services we rely on from nature, such as pest control, flood risk mitigation, urban shading and food security. Furthermore, nature's breakdown will significantly worsen the state of the economy; and conservative estimates suggest it could lead to a [12% reduction in GDP](#).

The climate and nature crises are not happening in isolation—they are deeply connected. Changes in climate are negatively impacting biodiversity, while the loss of nature is amplifying the breakdown of our climate, making us less able to adapt to it. We believe that to achieve the turn-around required, systemic change can only come quickly enough if it is delivered through legal reforms that integrate our response to the interconnected climate and nature emergencies. This was recognised by the 2021 [Dasgupta Review](#), commissioned by HM Treasury.

Current UK legislation—the Climate Change Act 2008 and the Environment Act 2021—are important pieces of legislation. However, given the scale of the crises, we need to rise fully to this greatest, long-term, global challenge we face; and, crucially, have an integrated, overarching plan to drive urgent, necessary action in this critical decade.

In December 2022 the UK was one of 196 parties signing up to the Convention on Biological Diversity's [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#), with a mission to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity by 2030, towards a world in which nature and people can thrive by 2050. Our existing, siloed approach to tackling what is an inter-linked nature and climate crisis is not aligned with the UK's international obligations to halt and reverse the loss of nature by 2030 at home and—crucially—overseas. This target is an essential milestone towards achieving the nature-positive future that the UK Government has committed to delivering. We also require a more holistic approach to tackling nature's destruction in terms of measuring species abundance, but also the health, abundance, diversity and resilience of our species, habitats and ecosystems.

The Climate Change Act 2008, which has been the foundation of UK climate policy for fifteen years, needs to be strengthened in several, key ways. Chiefly, it does not require the UK to account for the emissions it imports; yet, when we account for emissions from the goods we import, the UK's total carbon footprint far exceeds its proportionate share of the global remaining carbon budget for 1.5°C. Similarly, the Environment Act doesn't require us to address our overseas footprint on biodiversity. The issue here is that our current legislation only focuses inwards—while our patterns of international consumption wreak havoc on key ecosystems around the world. We cannot solve the problem with an 'island mentality'; environmental breakdown knows no boundaries.

Finally, there is no legislation bringing together climate and nature plans, meaning that these are currently developed in isolation. This is an issue when trying to tackle interweaved crises, as it creates implementation gaps whereby (i) some problems are inadequately tackled by both plans, and (ii) solutions developed to tackle one crisis can inadvertently make the other worse.

However, there is a viable, long-term, legislative solution on the table. One that is ready to go, which already has cross-party [support](#) from 163 MPs, 55 Peers, and 11 political parties—and which is supported by a nationwide movement of over 53,000 citizens plus 900 businesses, NGOs and organisations and 370 local authorities. This solution is the [Climate and Nature Bill](#), which is the only proposed legislation that will ensure that the UK has a driving, overarching and integrated framework to align our laws with Britain's international commitments.

This Parliament is critical for global action to both stay below 1.5°C, and to put biodiversity loss firmly in reverse. We have a small and rapidly closing window to act. The new Government has announced some promising proposals, but if they are not at the scientifically-required scale and ambition, if they are not integrated as part of a joined-up strategy across the whole of government, and if they are not implemented at pace, these proposals will remain aspirations.

On 5 September, the private members' bill ballot will be drawn. We write to you now to ask you to [enter your name](#) in the ballot book (on 3 or 4 September)—and, if you are successful, to select the Climate and Nature Bill as your ballot bill choice. By doing this, you will be helping to accelerate the timelines for making this critical Bill an Act of Parliament.

83% of people in the UK think climate change is a [serious threat to humanity](#)—and the same proportion say the UK Government should do more to tackle it. We understand that there is local support for the CAN Bill in your constituency and we hope that, given your role as an MP is to represent the interests and concerns of your constituents, this may be a straightforward decision for you.

We are calling on you to help us step up to this historic moment; the last, best chance we have for the UK to show leadership in steering the course of humanity towards a future where we can thrive, not merely survive. This can be your defining moment: standing up for the people of your constituency, of the UK, and across the world.

Please do not ignore the science—and please do not ignore us. Will you help prioritise the [Climate and Nature Bill](#) in this parliamentary session?

If you would like to discuss this letter or the CAN Bill, we would be delighted to talk with you, please contact Zero Hour (parliament@zerohour.uk) to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely,

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