

## Starmmer set for biggest Commons rebellion yet in key climate vote

- Government whips were in crisis mode last night as last-minute efforts were made to block the passing of a landmark climate bill in the Commons
- Up to 80 Labour MPs are signed up as Climate and Nature Bill supporters, and will tell whips they are prepared to defy the Government by voting for the Bill tomorrow [Friday]
- Campaigners say the numbers “sit on a knife edge” as Labour MPs say they face a three-line whip after ministers’ shock U-turn on support

**\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\***

**GOVERNMENT WHIPS were in crisis mode last night as attempts were made to stave off a mass rebellion amongst Labour MPs ahead of a key climate vote tomorrow [Friday].**

The Climate and Nature Bill is [supported by more than 190 MPs](#) – 80 of them Labour – and will face a Commons vote on Friday.

The private members’ bill, sponsored by Lib Dem MP Roz Savage, sets out bold plans to boost the UK’s transition to net zero and increase protections for nature.

Campaigners say record levels of support across the Commons mean they exceed the threshold of 100 MPs needed for the backbench proposals to pass.

The Climate and Nature Bill is the first non-government bill that threatens to be voted through by MPs under Keir Starmer’s leadership, despite opposition from the Government.

However, Labour MPs were “absolutely furious” last night after whips issued last minute orders to vote against the Bill, despite the party backing its “ambition and objectives” while in opposition.

One said *“I will not walk into the voting lobby alongside the climate deniers and those with their heads in the sand. It must be a free vote on Friday.”*

Government whips had previously called on volunteers to “help manage the day” on Friday, but there was no suggestion that Labour MPs would be instructed to vote against the measures.

At least two Labour MPs say they have since been told they will lose the whip if they support the private members’ bill, sparking alarm across the backbenches.

It is understood that party bosses are considering moving Friday’s decisive vote from one-line to three-line whip, where MPs’ attendance in Westminster goes from optional to compulsory.

Environmental campaign group [Zero Hour](#) say the numbers “sit on a knife edge” ahead of Friday’s vote.

They say supportive MPs across the country are cancelling constituency engagements and returning to Westminster in order to see the Bill voted through.

**A Labour MP supporting the Climate and Nature Bill said:**



*“Dozens of my Labour colleagues have backed the aims of the Climate and Nature Bill for years, and pre-election, the leadership did too.*

*“At the last minute, we are now being told we may have to vote against the CAN Bill. But what message does this send to our voters? Off of the back of the decisions on winter fuel payments, WASPI women and other U-turns and climb-downs, it tells them we are not a government of principle. Rather, one that cannot be trusted to keep to our word. And that, I’m afraid, will not end well for us.*

*“Therefore I will not walk into the voting lobby alongside the climate deniers and those with their heads in the sand. It must be a free vote on Friday. Or better still let the Government support it themselves.”*

**Another Labour MP said:**

*“I am shocked that we may be asked to vote against the Climate and Nature Bill.*

*“This a betrayal of all we stood for in the General Election. We need to show the public that we are willing to take bold action to tackle climate change.*

**Co-director of environmental campaign group [Zero Hour](#), Dr Amy McDonnell, said:**

*“Labour MPs are understandably absolutely furious with those ordering them to pull their support for the Climate and Nature Bill at the eleventh hour. Their constituents will no doubt share this anger too.*

*“The cross-party proposals to tackle the dual climate and nature crisis are overwhelmingly backed by the public. However, tomorrow’s vote is on a knife edge and the Government is clearly running scared.*

*“Ministers ought to take every opportunity they have to find a way forward and back the Bill tomorrow.”*

For more information visit: <https://www.zerohour.uk/climate-and-nature-bill/>

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## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### **About Zero Hour**

- [Zero Hour](#) advocates for the Climate and Nature Bill. It aims to achieve the UK's international climate and nature obligations through an integrated approach.
- The CAN Bill was first developed with members of the successful ‘Big Ask’ campaign, which led to the Climate Change Act 2008, and is now led by a coalition of UK campaigners, world-leading scientists, major NGOs and members of the public.
- The Bill was first introduced to Parliament in September 2020. It was introduced in the House of Lords in June 2022, and then in the House of Commons in May 2023, and March 2024.

## About the Climate and Nature Bill

- The [Climate and Nature Bill](#) is guaranteed a five-hour Commons debate during its second reading on 24 January 2025, and is sponsored by Liberal Democrat MP, Dr Roz Savage MBE.
- The 'CAN' Bill is backed by over 250 Parliamentarians, including Ed Davey, Carla Denyer and Zac Goldsmith.
- It enjoys the support of 55,000 members of the public; over 1,100 businesses, NGOs and charities; 1,200 [climate scientists](#) and health experts; and representatives of all main faiths.
- High-profile endorsers include [The Co-operative Bank](#), Patagonia, The W.I., Save British Farming, [The National Trust](#), Arup, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, [Ecotricity](#), The Wildlife Trusts, Ecosia and Triodos Bank.