

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon David Cameron MP
The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

12 May 2011

Dear Prime Minister

I am dismayed to hear you may reject the Committee on Climate Change's advice for the UK's fourth carbon budget.

The Labour Government legislated for the target of cutting the UK's carbon emissions by 80% by 2050 on 1990 levels in the Climate Change Act. At the time, I was pleased that this target appeared to have enthusiastic support of both the Conservative Party and the Liberal Democrats.

For all our other differences, it appeared that on this crucial issue for the future of the planet which our children will one day inherit, there was broad cross-party consensus. Both the Government and the Opposition of the day recognised that if we are serious about tackling climate change, we have to bring down emissions at the rate which the scientists say is necessary.

Any failure to adopt the Committee's recommendations in full would be the first time that the UK Government has explicitly decided not to cut emissions at a rate that independent experts say is necessary to prevent dangerous climate change. This would send a terrible signal to business and to the rest of the world.

As you know, the Committee's recommendations have strong support from business. John Lewis, Unilever, Shell, water and energy companies have all stated their support for adopting a strong fourth carbon budget. The vast potential for long-term economic growth and jobs for the UK's green industries is plain for all to see but will only be realised if the Government takes the right decisions for now and for the long-term.

Indeed, as the Foreign Secretary pointed out in his letter on the fourth carbon budget "uncertainty about the robustness of our climate policy is one of the principal barriers" to the achievement of a low carbon economy. He also pointed out "the UK has already slipped from third to thirteenth place on the global rankings of countries

investing in low carbon development and technology." A rejection of the fourth carbon budget risks turning uncertainty into a spiral of doubt.

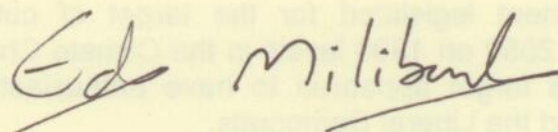
The decision you make will also have profound international repercussions. It is vital we restore momentum towards a global deal on climate change. We must not weaken the UK's influence on the world stage by rejecting the Committee's advice.

Climate change poses a big challenge to politics because the challenge is marked by a distance between the generation that needs to act and the generation that feels the greatest benefit. There is always a strong temptation to think short-term.

But this is a question of trust. In opposition you said that an independent body was necessary to set and enforce emissions targets, and that ministers should not be able to alter them. You argued at the time that this "would take the politics out of climate change and show our intention to get to grips with the problem".

I urge you not to break your commitment to tackling climate change and to adopt in full the key recommendations contained in the Committee on Climate Change's fourth carbon budget report.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ed Miliband". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Rt Hon Ed Miliband MP