

UK Energy Campaigning - post Fukushima

Lobbying for a Clean Energy Future: Summary Briefing

In this briefing

1. Summary
2. Introduction
3. Background - Energy Bill
4. Background – Finance Bill
5. Next steps
6. Further reading



1. Summary

We would like you to meet with your local MP as soon as possible and by early May at the latest to ask them to vote for specific amendments to the Energy Bill.

In preparation for this we would like you to start researching some background information on the Energy Bill, or refresh your memory if you were involved in the last round of action, in addition to working out the logistics of meeting your MP.

2. Introduction

It couldn't be clearer, from the appalling Fukushima disaster and fossil fuel price hikes following Middle East unrest, that the nuclear power and fossil fuels we've been relying on are dangerous, unreliable and expensive. It's urgent that the Government puts the country on a path to safe, secure and clean energy.

The first legislative opportunities the Government has to do this are through two Bills in the House of Commons both starting in May – the Energy Bill and the Finance Bill. As things stand, these Bills fail to set Britain onto a credible alternative path to a clean energy future. They also fly in the face of David Cameron's promise to lead the 'greenest government ever'.

Greenpeace is campaigning to clean up these Bills and to hold the coalition government to account on its promises. We need your help in lobbying your MP to make this happen!

3. Background – Energy Bill

The Energy Bill should be an opportunity to drive a nationwide home energy efficiency revolution with strong regulation to ensure every home is brought up to minimum insulation standards. It should introduce long promised regulation to drive down pollution from coal and gas stations through emissions performance standards. It should give a new role to local councils to do their bit to meet Britain's emissions reduction

targets. And it should overturn outdated rules that give priority access to the seabed to oil and gas companies over offshore wind farms. At the moment the Bill does none of this.

Instead, the home energy efficiency measures are too weak to make the difference needed and the Bill gives a further helping hand to the oil, gas and nuclear industries.

Although we worked hard with Peers to ensure our concerns were raised in the first stage of the Bill in the House of Lords, it is the next stage of the Bill in the House of Commons where we can have most impact.

Already last autumn, Greenpeace Active Supporters and the Lobbying Network starting getting the message through to MPs – thousands of signatures on postcards for MPs were collected at street stalls, and Greenpeace lobbyists across the country organised meetings at MP's constituency surgeries alongside the Stop Climate Chaos coalition. This has already had an impact and the government parties know the Bill will not get an easy ride at the Commons stage.

The Second Reading debate is our first opportunity in the Commons to influence ideas about key issues in the Bill. It will then progress to the Committee Stage, where MPs can table amendments to improve the Bill. Further amendments can be tabled and voted on at Report Stage, followed by a vote on the entire Bill at the Third (and final!) Reading.

Greenpeace wants to make sure MPs know that this Bill is an important test of their green credentials, that climate change is still an issue with voters (i.e. you) and that they should be voting for amendments to improve the Bill.

4. Background - Finance Bill

The **Finance Bill** is set to create a £3.4bn windfall for existing nuclear power stations through a new 'carbon floor price'. This will raise the cost of electricity for consumers while failing to drive significantly increased investment in renewable energy or energy efficiency.

The government wants to build up to 10 new nuclear reactors in Britain. But new nuclear power is not profitable without massive subsidies from the tax payer. All political parties have committed to not allowing public subsidy but the government is still planning billions of subsidy through the back door. This is the government's and the industry's Achilles heel on nuclear power. MPs must not go along with the plans for subsidy in the Finance Bill.

The Second Reading of the Bill is on April 26. As with the Energy Bill, this is the first opportunity MPs have to debate the measures put forward. There will be further opportunities to influence the Bill at the Committee, Report and Third Reading stages.

5. Next steps

We would like you to meet with your local MP to ask them to vote for specific amendments to the Energy Bill and to oppose the nuclear subsidy in the Finance Bill.

Please book an appointment as soon as possible, or by early May at the latest. Explain that you want to talk to your MP about the Energy Bill and the Finance Bill, and that you want to talk to them before April 26, or failing that, early May at the latest.

Please be polite but persistent, and if necessary phone your MP's office to ask for an appointment (i.e. don't rely on email). Ideally take a note of who is responsible for your MP's diary, and their contact details, for future reference.

If your MP's office still refuses to allow you to arrange an appointment then please email lobbying@uk.greenpeace.org with the excuses they are using. We will be back in touch with some ideas as to how to negotiate around these excuses.

Once you have successfully booked your appointment please email lobbying@uk.greenpeace.org to tell us what date your appointment is booked for.

Finally please contact other political lobbyists in the area to coordinate your lobbying meeting, and where appropriate please contact the local group/network to tell them when you are meeting your MP. We will be emailing you a list of contacts shortly.

We will send you a fuller briefing with key campaign messages and further details of what we would like you to ask your MP to do, in the coming weeks. MANY THANKS!

6. Further reading

Please start to do some background reading around the Energy Bill:

- <http://www.demandabetterbill.org.uk>
- http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/legislation/energy_bill/energy_bill.aspx
- <http://www.greenpeace.org.uk/blog/climate/measures-clean-power-sector-wont-be-coalitions-energy-law-20100817>
- Cf. for economic case against nuclear:
<http://www.greenpeace.org.uk/media/reports/subsidy-assessment-waste-transfer-pricing-disposal-spent-fuel-new-nuclear-power-station>
- Briefings from October work on the Energy Bill:
<http://www.greenpeace.org.uk/groups/lobbying-and-advanced-communication/blog/energy-bill>

Please use Google to seek out other useful sources of information and post interesting links to the web group as comments here:

<http://www.greenpeace.org.uk/groups/lobbying-advanced-communication/blog/energy-finance-bill>