



The Climate Emergency Law

Briefing Note – July 2020

The aim is to present one simple package of measures in law, designed to eliminate the UK's greenhouse gas emissions and would act as a model for every country around the world. Rather than simply accounting and budgeting for emissions, it would put duties on every organisation in public and private sector to act to reduce emissions. It would present a specific and practical demand, by which pressure can be applied to government, by campaigners and communities.

The Act would be a framework that would require every organisation to audit its greenhouse gas emissions and require the adoption of solutions (that already exist but are not being rolled out) across public and private sectors. Solutions that are required include transforming to zero carbon buildings, existing and to be built (mainly by the private sector in the UK), the reduction of the use of private car and road haulage (pedestrianisation of all urban areas, move from road to rail requiring public infrastructure investment, electrification of rural transport systems); the reduction of air travel; changing the agricultural sector to reduce meat production and consumption; the reduction of consumption in sectors such as the clothing industry; and the elimination of fossil fuels from the electricity sector. All of this has to happen really quickly – ideally starting from now, with politically significant timeframes (i.e. next year, two years, to five years).

The difference between the proposed Climate Emergency Act and the existing Climate Change Act in the UK is that in our proposal:

- The duties this act will impose, are more onerous, so will lead to a new culture of action from every organisation at every level;
- The Climate Emergency Act imposes duties on every organisation to engage with and take action to reduce GHGs, whereas the existing Climate Change Act is concerned mainly with responsibilities of the Secretary of State (which therefore has no impact on how we behave);
- The Act will provide for enforcement against inaction by a newly appointed Climate Emergency Commission; this will be a body with significant powers to enforce through investigation and litigation.