

## Common Cause: the Green Standard 2009

### It's now or never: Green NGOs offer pre-election environment challenge to political parties

Press Release 18.09.09

On the eve of party conference season, eight of the UK's leading environmental organisations<sup>1</sup> today publish *Common Cause: the Green Standard manifesto on climate change and the natural environment*<sup>2</sup>. They are calling on all the political parties to endorse the *Common cause declaration*<sup>3</sup>, which states that climate change and restoring the natural environment should be accorded the highest priority during the next Parliament. They are also calling on the parties to commit to 10 green manifesto proposals for 2010.

The stakes are high: the price of failure would be paid by those in the UK and internationally who are most at risk from climate change, and in the irreversible loss of countryside and biodiversity. Action is required now, not in the decades to come.

Stephen Hale, director of Green Alliance, said on behalf of the groups:

"It's now or never. Support for the *Common cause declaration* will be the threshold for credibility at the next election on environmental issues. The commitment to decisive action must be endorsed by all parties. The real contest will be over specific policies, so we urge them to include our 10 manifesto asks for 2010 in their forthcoming manifestos.

"Action in the next parliament is critical if we are to simultaneously reduce our CO<sub>2</sub> emissions whilst improving the resilience of our natural environment to avoid the looming crises of food, energy and water shortages by 2030."

#### The 10 manifesto proposals for 2010

We call on all UK political parties to commit to our 10 manifesto proposals for 2010 in their General Election manifestos:

1. Put the UK on track to reduce UK greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020, and 80 per cent by 2050.
2. Ensure future energy and transport infrastructure is consistent with a rapid transition to a low-carbon economy by generating at least 15 per cent of energy from renewables by 2020; introducing an immediate ban on new unabated or substantially unabated coal plants and an end to airport expansion.
3. Commit to strong UK leadership at the highest levels in the EU and globally, to deliver EU energy and climate targets and to ensure global greenhouse gas emissions are falling by 2015.
4. Provide the UK's fair share of finance for adaptation, low-carbon development and to reduce deforestation in the developing world of a least \$160 billion a year from 2012.
5. Commit to making significant progress towards restoring the natural environment by 2020, including the doubling of UK woodland cover, meeting other habitat targets and ensuring that protected sites are in good condition; through utilising reforms to agricultural incentives, planning policy and other measures to create high quality landscapes rich in nature and able to adapt to climate change.

6. Ensure that everyone has the opportunity to experience and enjoy nature by providing access to natural green space within walking distance of where they live.
7. Commit to reorienting the planning system so that sustainable development rather than simply economic development is at its heart, requiring all major development plans and planning applications to show how they will contribute to carbon reduction targets.
8. Dedicate all income generated by the emissions trading scheme after 2012 to tackling climate change in the UK and internationally.
9. Protect and increase Defra and DECC budgets and introduce significant new policies to stimulate private investment in the low-carbon economy and the natural environment.
10. Launch a nationwide housing retrofit programme by 2011, which will deliver improved energy efficiency and renewable energy systems across the UK.

## Ends

### Media contacts:

Matthew Davis, Green Alliance media adviser: 07758 300 007; [matthew@3-c.uk.net](mailto:matthew@3-c.uk.net)  
Tracy Carty, Green Alliance senior policy adviser: 020 7630 4527/07815 086218;  
[tcarty@green-alliance.org.uk](mailto:tcarty@green-alliance.org.uk)

CPRE: Ben Stafford, CPRE, 020 7981 2818 / [BenS@cpre.org.uk](mailto:BenS@cpre.org.uk)

Friends of the Earth: Press Office, 020 7566 1649

Greenpeace: Press Office, 0207 865 8255

RSPB: Judith Howell, Head of Government Affairs, 01767 693254 / 020 7808 1250 / 07595 654985 / [Judith.Howell@rspb.org.uk](mailto:Judith.Howell@rspb.org.uk)

The Wildlife Trusts: Anna Guthrie, media & PR manager, 07887 754659 / [aguthrie@wildlifetrusts.org](mailto:aguthrie@wildlifetrusts.org)

Woodland Trust: Debbie Nicholls, 01476 581121 / [debbienicholls@woodlandtrust.org.uk](mailto:debbienicholls@woodlandtrust.org.uk)

WWF-UK: Benjamin Ward, Head of Media, 07837 134 193 / 01483 412378 / [bward@wwf.org.uk](mailto:bward@wwf.org.uk)

### Notes for Editors:

1. The organisations that are part of the Green Standard initiative are: CPRE, Friends of the Earth, Green Alliance, Greenpeace, RSPB, The Wildlife Trusts, Woodland Trust and WWF-UK
2. You can download the report at [www.green-alliance.org.uk](http://www.green-alliance.org.uk)
3. **Common cause declaration**

Tackling climate change and restoring the natural environment must be accorded the highest priority during the next Parliament. By tackling these issues successfully, we will improve the quality of life for all, now and in the future. We accept our responsibility to accelerate the prominence of climate change and the natural environment in both political debate and action and on the ground.

We recognise the positive economic, social and environmental cases for action. An environmentally sustainable low-carbon economy and society is within reach. We will work to maximise the opportunities this presents; creating jobs, more control for communities, a fairer and more responsible society, and the protection and restoration of the natural environment in the interests of all. We know we neglect these issues at our peril.

Climate change is the most urgent challenge facing humanity. We are committed to taking action now globally, in Europe and in the UK, at the scale and urgency that the science tells us is necessary. The next Parliament will be critical in determining

whether we meet UK and international targets for 2015 and 2020. We will do our utmost to achieve those targets.

We recognise the importance of the natural environment to the people of Britain. We share their conviction that Britain's natural environment and countryside are an integral part of Britain's heritage and identity. They are also central to our future well-being because of the services they provide and are threatened by the impact of climate change. We will work to protect and enhance the quality of Britain's natural environment and to take account of these impacts.

We will use the full range of regulatory, fiscal, spending and other powers available to us to achieve these goals. This will include providing businesses, communities, individuals and other actors with the opportunities and incentives they need to make their full contribution. This way we will achieve successful national and international action on climate change and the natural environment.

4. In 2007 and 2008 the groups produced *Green Standard* reports that assessed the three main parties environmental performance.
5. Green Alliance is holding fringe events at the Climate Clinic at each of the party conferences where the MPs leading on the drafting of each of the party manifestos will be responding to the report: Danny Alexander MP (Lib Dems), Oliver Letwin MP (Conservatives) and Ed Miliband MP (Labour).
6. The Climate Clinic will, for the fourth year running, be at all three main political party conferences. Its aim is to push for real political action to tackle climate change by mobilising the UK's most influential scientists, politicians, industry leaders and environmental campaigners. The Climate Clinic is a coalition of 20+ of the UK's leading environment and development groups, trade bodies and professional societies representing over six million members. For more details visit [www.climateclinic.org.uk](http://www.climateclinic.org.uk)