

Media Briefing



**Friends of
the Earth**

Advance: 2nd July 2007

Brief history of The Big Ask, Friends of the Earth's climate campaign

Friends of the Earth has been campaigning for a new law to cut UK carbon dioxide emissions through The Big Ask climate campaign. The organisation has used various tactics and events to raise awareness of the campaign and to encourage people to back the campaign.

The campaign has already been tremendously successful, with the Government agreeing to introduce a new climate change law late last year.

7 April 2005

Three MPs introduce a climate change Bill, drafted by Friends of the Earth, to Parliament setting annual targets for the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions until 2050. Parliament was then shortly dissolved ahead of the general election. The MPs were former Conservative Environment Minister John Gummer, former Labour Environment Minister Michael Meacher and the then Lib Dem Environment spokesman Norman Baker.

25 May 2005

Friends of the Earth formally launches The Big Ask climate campaign (www.thebigask.com), with Radiohead front man Thom Yorke, calling for new legislation to make the Government responsible for cutting UK carbon dioxide emissions by three per cent every year.

This coincides with a NOP survey for Friends of the Earth showing that 73 per cent of the population thought that the Government wasn't doing enough to tackle climate change.

Page 1

Contact:

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And on the same day a Parliamentary petition (Early Day Motion 178) opens calling for new legislation requiring "annual cuts in carbon dioxide emissions of three per cent".

13 July 2005

Friends of the Earth is one of the organisations behind a new coalition, Stop Climate Chaos, calling for a new climate law with annual carbon dioxide cuts. Over the next 12 months the coalition grows enormously.

3 March 2006

Friends of the Earth publishes a new report, A Bright Future, showing how the UK could develop climate solutions to meet its energy needs and tackle climate change without using nuclear power.

1 May 2006

Thom Yorke and Jonny Greenwood of Radiohead headline The Big Ask Live concert at Koko in London. A Friends of the Earth survey reveals that three quarters of the population would support a new law requiring annual cuts in carbon emissions. The event is attended by David Miliband and David Cameron. The Big Ask Live is augmented by a series of gigs around the UK.

1 September 2006

Conservative leader David Cameron shares a platform with Friends of the Earth director Tony Juniper to call for a climate change law to be included in the next Queen's Speech. By now 380 MPs have so far signed EDM 178, calling for a new climate law.

15 September 2006

Friends of the Earth and the Cooperative Bank commission the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, to produce the UK's first roadmap to a low carbon economy. The research reveals that the UK has only four years to implement the measures needed to cut carbon emissions.

Mid September 2006

Friends of the Earth launches a big push on the Climate Change Bill to encourage as many MPs as possible to sign EDM 178 and to write to the Prime Minister calling for new

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legislation on climate change.

Over the coming weeks 620 MPs (out of a total of 646 MPs) are lobbied personally by constituents who back The Big Ask campaign.

12 October 2006

David Miliband indicates that the Government will introduce legislation to tackle climate change.

17 October 2007

Thom Yorke lobbies his MP in Oxford as part of The Big Ask campaign for a new climate bill.

8 November 2006

A number of young people under 16 visit Tony Blair in Downing Street to discuss climate change and to urge him to introduce a new Climate Change Bill. By now 412 MPs have signed EDM 178 - 64 per cent of MPs overall, and a majority in every party sitting in Parliament.

15 November 2006

The Government announces in the Queen's Speech that it will introduce a new climate change law. The announcement was warmly welcomed by Friends of the Earth. But the environmental campaign group said that that the Bill needs to be tough enough to ensure annual cuts in carbon dioxide emissions of at least three per cent.

22 November 2007

Prime Minister Tony Blair and Friends of the Earth's director Tony Juniper launch an on-line debate on climate change. The Big Ask climate debate featured short article form the Prime Minister and Tony Juniper, with the public adding their contributions too.

20 February 2007

Friends of the Earth launches a series of Inconvenient Truth screenings followed by debates with senior politicians including David Miliband, David Cameron, Sir Menzies Campbell and Ken Livingstone.

13 March 2007

The Government publishes its draft climate change Bill. Friends of the Earth welcomes the Bill, but the group calls for it to be strengthened to ensure that it is effective.

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30 May 2007

Razorlight's Johnny Borrell joins Friends of the Earth to highlight some of the solutions to climate change that already exist and which would flourish with the introduction of a strong climate change law. The solutions day involves showing journalists a new carbon-free motorbike, low-carbon bus and a London restaurant where most of the food is grown within the M25. Johnny Borrell also records a new song in a solar-powered recording studio.

5 July 2007

Friends of the Earth launches The Big Ask online march.

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