



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Dr Caroline Lucas MEP  
Suite 58  
The Hop Exchange  
24 Southwark Street  
London SE1 1TY

18<sup>th</sup> March 2008

Our Ref: MH/JD/PRU

*Dear Caroline,*

Thank you for your recent correspondence regarding the Climate Change Bill.

As you will know, climate change is an issue about which I am deeply concerned. In 1992, as environment secretary, it fell to me to persuade the US Government to attend the Rio summit and sign the UN framework convention on climate change; in 24 hours of shuttle diplomacy the Americans were persuaded on both counts. The framework convention, of course, provides the basis for the Kyoto protocol and all subsequent agreements.

I am acutely conscious that man-made climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing our world today and I can assure you that Conservatives are leading Parliamentary efforts to ensure that Britain's response to this crisis is both ambitious and effective.

I am aware that it has been argued that the proposed 2050 target of CO<sub>2</sub> reductions of "at least 60%" is inadequate. Our approach is to enable any targets to be based on scientific recommendations rather than an arbitrary number which may or may not be right. It is following pressure from Conservatives that the Government has given an assurance that one of the first tasks of the new Committee will be to evaluate the validity of the

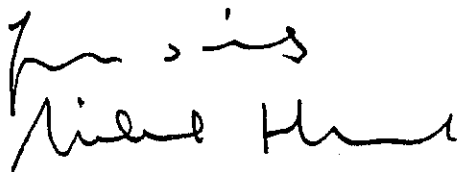
60% 2050 target, and I understand that they will report on this by the end of the year.

Fundamental to our approach is the widely accepted scientific opinion that, to avoid dangerous climate change, it will be essential to keep the average global temperature rise to below 2 degrees Celsius. The UK's long, and short, term targets for CO<sub>2</sub> reductions should be set at levels which will ensure that we play our part in meeting that objective. It is perhaps also worth observing the importance of achieving cuts in CO<sub>2</sub> in the near term, in order to set a clear trajectory. In that sense, the 2020 target is perhaps the vital one at this stage.

I hope that you will understand, therefore, that it would be inconsistent with this approach for me to sign EDM 736, even though I appreciate that it is well intentioned.

As the Climate Change Bill progresses through Parliament, Conservatives will be pushing to strengthen the Bill and ensure the inclusion of measures designed to ensure global warming stays within 2°C.

I am grateful to you for writing.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Howard". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M".

MICHAEL HOWARD