

Britain launches renewables drive to cut emissions

15 July 2009



Energy Secretary Ed Miliband, seen here in 2008, said tackling climate change would require "comprehensive changes" in Britain's economy and society, as he unveiled proposals to cut emissions from transport, agriculture and industry.

Britain announced plans Wednesday to slash emissions with a huge increase in the use of renewable energy to generate one third of the country's electricity needs by 2020.

Energy Secretary Ed Miliband said tackling [climate change](#) would require "comprehensive changes" in Britain's economy and society, as he unveiled proposals to cut emissions from transport, agriculture and industry.

Forty percent of electricity would come from renewables such as wind and [wave energy](#), and nuclear and "clean fossil fuels", he said.

Britain has committed to cuts of 34 percent in emissions by 2020, and has signed up to European Union targets to source 15 percent of all energy from renewable sources by the end of the

next decade.

It has already reduced [greenhouse gases](#) by about 21 percent compared to 1990 levels, including cuts that companies have purchased through the EU Emission Trading Scheme (ETS).

Explaining how the targets would be met, Miliband said that by 2020, 30 percent of electricity would come from renewables and a further 10 percent from nuclear and coal plants where emissions were captured and stored.

The fuel sources were "the trinity of low carbon and the future of energy in Britain", the minister said.

The government has come under fire over the potential costs of "greening" the British energy sector, but Miliband insisted it would be less costly than feared because of technological advances.

He said the new measures would not increase energy bills before 2015 but admitted bills would rise afterwards by as much as eight percent. But there will be some grants available to make homes more energy efficient.

Miliband also said up to 400,000 jobs could be provided by green jobs from sectors such as low-carbon industry, recycling and waste.

On the day Britain's jobless rate surged to its highest for 12 years, Business Secretary Peter Mandelson said: "The transition to a low-carbon economy provides an important part of the answer of where the future jobs are going to come from".

"This is a challenge that every economy is facing, and we are determined that by setting clear policy now, Britain positions itself to benefit both economically and environmentally from the transition," Mandelson said.

The Campaign to Protect Rural England, the RSPB

and National Trust said in a joint statement that a renewable [energy](#) revolution in Britain was long overdue.

They added: "We look forward to working with government to ensure this takes place within the timescale needed to tackle climate change."

Greenpeace generally welcomed the plans, but urged the government to back them with sufficient funding.

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