

# Britain delays emissions cut decision to 2016

23 November 2012



British Prime Minister David Cameron speaks next to British Energy Secretary Ed Davey (right) at the Clean Energy Ministerial conference. The British government's long-awaited legislation that aims to secure investment in low-carbon energy will not include a target to cut emissions by 2030, according to details released on Friday.

The British government's long-awaited legislation to secure investment in low-carbon energy will not include a target to cut emissions by 2030, according to details released on Friday.

After months of wrangling, the [coalition government](#) of Prime Minister David Cameron's Conservatives and the [Liberal Democrats](#) reached agreement late on Thursday on an [Energy Bill](#) to be published next week.

In a compromise, the coalition partners agreed to delay until 2016 a decision on cutting emissions from the power sector by 2030, but their move was heavily criticised by environmental campaigners.

The negotiations have been characterised as a battleground between [finance minister](#) George Osborne, who favours energy generated by gas-

powered plants and the Lib Dems, who want clean energy sources such as renewables and nuclear.

Osborne believes the use of gas will keep bills down, while the Lib Dems—the junior partners in the coalition—want gas phased out of the [energy system](#).

An estimated £110 billion (136 billion euros, \$175 billion) is needed in the next decade to renew Britain's ageing electricity infrastructure, with much earmarked for low-carbon power sources such as [wind farms](#) to cut emissions.

Ministers agreed that £7.6 billion could go towards securing low-carbon electricity in 2020, up from £2.35 billion this year, but consumers were warned they will see their [energy bills](#) rise to pay for it.

The main opposition Labour party said the decision to delay the setting of an emissions target was a "humiliating failure" for the government, while green groups said it left Britain over-reliant on gas at a time when prices were rising.

Energy minister Ed Davey, a Lib Dem, insisted it was "a durable agreement across the coalition against which companies can invest and support jobs and our economic recovery".

"The decisions we've reached are true to the coalition agreement. They mean we can introduce the Energy Bill next week and have essential electricity market reforms up and running by 2014 as planned," he said.

However, Friends of the Earth's executive director Andy Atkins said the agreement was "the final nail in the coffin of Cameron's pledge to lead the greenest government ever.

He added: "This decision motivated by outdated ideology will help keep the nation hooked on increasingly expensive gas, drive away green jobs

and investment and jeopardise UK climate goals."

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