



From: Scientists Warning Europe,

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To: The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP, Prime Minister,

10 Downing Street,

London, SW1 2AA

12 February 2021

Dear Prime Minister Johnson

I write on behalf of experienced scientists associated with Scientists Warning Europe, and other eminent scientists and academics, in support of the letter sent to you by Dr. James E. Hansen last week on 3rd February 2021.¹

We would urge you to heed Dr. Hansen's advice and step up to embrace the role of World leader in facing down the Climate and Biodiversity Crisis. As Dr Hansen and others including Sir David Attenborough, Dr. Jane Goodall and the UN Secretary General, António Guterres, have recently pointed out; there is still a window of opportunity to act decisively and swiftly to prevent catastrophe. That window is closing fast and during your watch.

As Dr. Hansen so rightly asserts the World's youth, and particularly those in the UK, will be scrutinising your every decision, or lack of, during this critical year in the lead up to COP26. The youth climate strikes all over the UK have put your government on notice of their demands – the young expect the UK to lead in taking real meaningful action while setting an example for the rest of the World.

Dr. Jane Goodall said in a recent interview with Scientist Warning Europe, the young believe that their elders have stolen their future and are still stealing it.² This is the moment to stop that theft and honour our inter-generational contract. The young are calling out for brave and inspirational leaders to galvanise their nations to massive concerted action in the face of the Climate and Biodiversity Crisis. Those leaders who rise to the challenge will see their names written into the history books rather than vilified for their negligent inaction. There will be no hiding from history – this is the moment of truth.

For us to have a real chance of keeping the World safe, under the 1.5°C threshold specified in the Paris Accord, we need to aim for a very much more ambitious net zero target, ideally 2030. Every year we allow our global net zero target to be pushed back increases the risk that global tipping points will be reached and surpassed.

The Committee on Climate Change in its recent Sixth Carbon Budget report determined that the cost for the UK of reaching net zero 2050 is from ½% to 1% of annual GDP.³ 1% is NOT an emergency response to the Climate and

Biodiversity Crisis. The UK parliament has declared that there is a "Climate Emergency", as have 496 local councils⁴ around the UK representing in total over 91% of the population,⁵ and that requires urgent action.

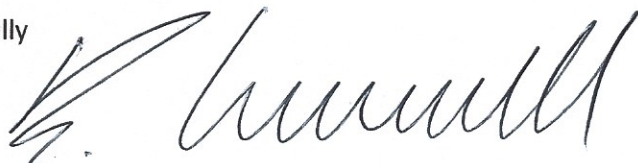
There is already forward momentum for a national 2030 net zero target with around 60% of local councils (District, County, Unitary & Metropolitan) declaring a climate emergency picking 2030 or before for their own targets.⁶ The recent UN Development Programme poll, which interviewed 1.2 million people, showed that 64% of the World's population believe there is a climate emergency. In the UK, and in Italy (joint hosts for COP26) this figure is as high as 81%.⁷

We need to focus minds by declaring a net zero target that is significantly in advance of 2050. In fact, the Committee on Climate Change already identified one potential pathway (it's "tailwinds" scenario) which would see net zero achieved in UK by 2042 at the same level of GDP investment.³

As Churchill said "History will be kind to me, for I intend to write it". Prime Minister, you are now at a unique point in history and with every decision you make you are writing it. We urge you to take truly brave decisions, including setting a real emergency net zero target, and thereby be instrumental in safeguarding our children and grandchildren's future while ensuring your own place in history.

We offer our commitment and help to you in achieving this.

Yours faithfully



Ed Gemmell, Managing Director, Scientists Warning Europe

For and on behalf of

Professor Mark P. Baldwin, Global Systems Institute and Mathematics Department, University of Exeter

Professor Joy Carter, CBE, Vice-Chancellor, University of Winchester

Professor Dave Goulson, Professor of Biology at University of Sussex, Scientific Advisory Panel Member
Scientists Warning Europe

Professor Joanna Haigh, Emeritus Professor of Atmospheric Physics, Imperial College London

Professor Tim Jackson, Professor of Sustainable Development and Director of the Centre for the
Understanding of Sustainable Prosperity (CUSP), University of Surrey

Professor Felicia Keesing, David and Rosalie Rose Distinguished Professor of Science, Mathematics, and
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Professor Sir David King, FRS, Founder and Chair, Centre for Climate Repair at Cambridge University

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By post and by email

Copies to

The Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP, President COP26 to the UNFCCC, Cabinet Office, 70 Whitehall, London, SW1A 2AS

Lord Deben, Chairman, Climate Change Committee, 151, Buckingham Palace Road, London, SW1W 9SZ

1 https://uploads.guim.co.uk/2021/02/03/HANSEN-JOHNSON_Letter_2021.02.03.pdf

2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TtnMLxPeNTg>

3 Figure 5.4, The Sixth Carbon Budget, The UK's Pathway to Net Zero <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/The-Sixth-Carbon-Budget-The-UKs-path-to-Net-Zero.pdf>

4 <https://www.cedamia.org/global/> and <https://www.climateemergency.uk/climate-emergency-declarations/>

5 <https://www.cedamia.org/global/> and <https://www.climateemergency.uk/climate-emergency-declarations/>

6 <https://www.climateemergency.uk/blog/list-of-councils/>

7 Figure 3 UNDP Oxford People's Climate Vote <https://beta.documentcloud.org/documents/20464682-undp-oxford-peoples-climate-vote-results>