

STATES OF JERSEY



CLIMATE CHANGE: COPENHAGEN CONFERENCE – PETITION

Lodged au Greffe on 8th December 2009
by the Deputy of St. Mary

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

to receive the petition concerning the Copenhagen Conference in December 2009 and to request the Council of Ministers, following publication of the results of the Copenhagen Conference, to give detailed consideration to these results and report back to the States within 6 months of the adoption of this proposition on how they intend to respond, their report to include detailed proposals and timescales.

DEPUTY OF ST. MARY

REPORT

1. The consensus among the global scientific community is that climate change is happening now, and must be limited if we are to avoid catastrophic consequences. The generally accepted consensus is that we must keep the rise in global temperatures to 2° above pre-industrial levels. This 2° is not a “safe level,” it is simply less dangerous than rises beyond. It is achievable, but only with concerted action on an international scale.
2. From 7th – 18th December 2009, representatives of more than 190 countries will be meeting in Copenhagen to discuss this most pressing issue of our time: the issue of how the international community should respond to the challenge of climate change. Representatives at the conference will be negotiating a successor to the Kyoto Protocol, which currently regulates the emission of greenhouse gases.
3. Climate change is an issue that affects us all. The effects of a runaway increase in temperature on the lives of the next generation do not bear thinking about. Particularly unsettling is the fact that the impact will be particularly severe on the lives of those in poor countries such as Kenya and Bangladesh who have done least to cause climate change, with carbon footprints per head around 1/40th of ours.
4. Just as climate change confronts us all with a fundamental moral challenge, so too we all have the power to make a difference at an individual level. Many are already reducing their direct and indirect energy consumption and seeking to live on a more sustainable basis.
5. The government of Jersey also has the power to make change happen, not only by seeking to influence others as a member of the international community, but also by adopting policies tailored to Jersey which enable us to move to a new low-carbon way of life and by setting targets for reducing our greenhouse gas emissions on an Island-wide basis.
6. There are 3 main reasons for doing this. First, it is irresponsible *not* to act. One of the main roles of government, historically, has been to defend and protect its citizens. It has a duty to be pro-active in anticipating dangers and risks, to assess their magnitude and probability, and to take the necessary action. We do the same all the time with respect to trying to safeguard the future of our main industry.
7. Second, for our own self-esteem we owe it to ourselves to play our part in the global effort to tackle climate change and not to stand aside. And third, it is in our own interests to move to a low-carbon economy in a sensible, managed and positive way rather than suffer the consequences of not being ready, and being forced to adapt in a chaotic and unplanned way when the energy price rises arrive.
8. Local concern about the issue of climate change has been evidenced by the formation of the Jersey Climate Action Network in November 2008. The group has 3 main aims –

- (a) to raise awareness of the issues of peak oil and climate change;
 - (b) to provide a network for the exchange of ideas and information; and
 - (c) to take action to reduce dependency on fossil fuels and counter the impact of climate change.
9. Since its establishment last year the group has been active on a number of fronts, organising public talks and film evenings, and supporting international campaigns and events such as 'Earth Hour' in April and the 'Climate Change World Day of Action' in October. The group's most recent initiative has been to focus attention on the Copenhagen Conference by organising the current petition, which asks the Council of Ministers, following the publication of targets agreed at the Copenhagen Conference: *'to give detailed consideration to these targets and report back to the States within six months of the closing date of the Conference on how they intend to respond, their report to include detailed proposals and timescales.'*
10. Just under 1,500 signatures (1,468) have been collected over the last 2 months, providing clear evidence of significant concern amongst Islanders about the impact of climate change and the need to take action. Due to incomplete or faulty addresses, the "official number" is considerably less (1,059), but in this case the intentional number is clearly more significant than the technically verified number.
11. Members may think: "well, 1,500 is not many". To which I would make some comments. Climate change has basically been ignored by our political class, it has received, as a consequence, little media coverage and therefore public awareness of the issue and its relevance is lower than it should be. Consider for example that it does not appear in the index of the Island Plan (nor does carbon, CO₂, or carbon emissions) nor is it mentioned in the consultation paper for the sustainable transport plan.
12. Second, even if it were higher profile in Jersey it is still not an immediate, "sexy" issue with immediate consequences like, say, not having an 800 space multi-storey car park at Ann Court, or saying "No to GST".
13. And third, there is clear evidence that in fact people in Jersey are voting with their feet on this issue, and adopting lifestyle changes and attitudes which go in the direction of reducing impact on the environment such as taking the bus, actively participating in, or wanting, recycling, buying local, and growing their own food.
14. The reasons for bringing this issue to the States have been summarised in the preamble to the petition –
 - *'A global effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is essential to ensure that the Earth's average temperature does not rise more than an absolute maximum of two degrees centigrade above pre-industrialised levels;*

- *This will require a commitment from all Countries and Parliaments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to sustainable levels;*
 - *The general scientific consensus is that emissions must be reduced to at least 80% below their 1990 levels by 2050 to avoid catastrophic climate change;*
 - *The global targets for sustainable levels of greenhouse gas emissions will be decided on at the United Nations Climate Change Conference 2009, taking place in Copenhagen between the 7th and the 18th of December 2009.'*
15. The petition was drawn up in August 2009, at a time when there was a general expectation that specific targets for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions would be agreed at the Copenhagen Conference. In the intervening period it has become apparent that there are still some major areas of disagreement on specific targets and timescales, and it now appears more likely the Conference will agree on a general programme for change, with more specific targets to be negotiated and agreed over the next 12 months. It is for this reason, therefore, that the proposition to the States has asked the Council of Ministers to report back within 6 months on how they intend to respond to the results of the Conference, rather than the 'targets' referred to in the petition. These results will be published in a communiqué to be agreed at the end of the conference on 18th December.
16. The petition recognises that agreement has yet to be reached at an international level on targets for reduction, and may not be reached at the Copenhagen Conference, and it also acknowledges that the Council of Ministers – and ultimately the States – will want to take a view on what would be an appropriate response to the results of the Conference.
17. It will be recalled that on 10th June 2009 the Assembly adopted the States Strategic Plan 2009 – 2014 (P.52/2009), and as part of this decision it approved an amendment which asked the Council of Ministers to '*evaluate on an ongoing basis Peak Oil and Climate Change and report to the States once a year on their impacts on policy for Jersey.*' The first of these annual reports will therefore be due in June 2010.
18. Should this proposition be accepted by the Assembly, and adapting this timescale, this report could be produced 6 months after this proposition is debated, and include the Council's proposals on how they intend to respond to the results of the Copenhagen Conference.

Financial and manpower implications

19. This proposition does not have any significant financial and manpower implications. It asks the Council of Ministers to prepare additional specific material for the report mentioned above in paragraph 17. It is, however, quite possible that the detailed proposals to be included in the Council's report will have resource implications, both in terms of expenditure and in terms of income and savings, and these will need to be set out in that report.

PETITION

TO THE PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE STATES OF JERSEY

Name of person(s) or body responsible for this petition –

The Jersey Climate Action Network (J-CAN)

These are the reasons for this petition –

A global effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is essential to ensure that the Earth's average temperature does not rise more than an absolute maximum of two degrees centigrade above pre-industrialised levels.

This will require a commitment from all Countries and Parliaments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to sustainable levels.

The general scientific consensus is that emissions must be reduced to at least 80% below their 1990 levels by 2050 to avoid catastrophic climate change.

The global targets for sustainable levels of greenhouse gas emissions will be decided on at the United Nations Climate Change Conference 2009, taking place in Copenhagen between the 7th and the 18th of December 2009.

We, the undersigned, petition the States of Jersey as follows –

Following publication of the targets agreed at the Copenhagen Conference, the Council of Ministers should give detailed consideration to these targets and report back to the States within six months of the closing date of the Conference on how they intend to respond, their report to include detailed proposals and timescales.

Full name (please print)	Full postal address	Signature

1,059 signatures