

Speech by Lord Howell of Guildford in the House of Lords on adoption by the UK of the Kyoto Protocol regulations. April 13th 2021.

Why the UK's net zero policy delivers net zero impact on climate change. Change of emphasis needed.

My Lords, I echo the final question asked by the noble Lord, Lord Whitty, about the true nature of our carbon footprint in the world. I want also to point out that global emissions are again set to rise, and that, while the goals of greening our economy and aiming for net zero are admirable, they and the Kyoto regulations, in whatever form we now take them on board in the registry, fall far far short of what is needed to tackle climate change.

I am sorry to strike a slightly negative note. However, as Jeremy Warner remarked in last week's *Sunday's Telegraph*,

“unless China and the rest of the developing world are on board, all efforts to reach a net zero world are doomed. It matters not a jot what America and Europe do to reduce their emissions if the rest of the world isn't doing the same.”

The Kyoto Protocol is 24 years old, but here we are still struggling to curb rising greenhouse gases, both CO₂ and, even more of course, methane, which is 28 times as lethal. We really do need accurate and frank guidance on how to avert world climate catastrophe, which we are just not getting from the Committee on Climate Change and other authorities. This could be the opportunity to get the change needed.

As I said, global emissions are set to rise, after a pause during the pandemic, whereas to reach Paris accord targets they should be falling by at least 7.6% per year. Rising emissions in the big emitting countries, particularly from coal burning and particularly in Asia and Africa, are about to outweigh by far any reductions we can possibly make, so carbon concentrations in the atmosphere are set to continue growing almost unabated.

Coal of course produces about 46% of carbon emissions and, unless the technology for capturing and using carbon from these world sources is vastly improved and cheapened, and applied to all coal burning throughout Africa and Asia, there is not the slightest chance of meeting climate goals, which presumably is what we are about. This is where there should be an all-out concentration of resources and brainpower.

Present policies, although they involve enormous expenditure of national resources and are desirable in our narrow national interest, are not addressing the key issues. There is no safe haven here at home from climate change. What we

need is not Kyoto or Paris but a multinational endeavour, a Manhattan-scale project, at least on the scale of China's belt and road initiative.

Without this kind of new strategy emphasis, the rise in global emissions will continue. Kyoto, Paris, net zero and all the rest will do almost nothing to check the real drivers of global warming. That is the honest and frank message that I would like to see come from these discussions to shape policy priorities, and it is the real message and policy direction which the next generation deserves and which should shape the whole approach that we take at COP 26.