



Department of Energy & Climate Change

Energy Act: Decarbonisation

Issue: A power to allow the Secretary of State to set a decarbonisation target range for the UK power sector through secondary legislation.

Policy commitment:

The Government announced in November 2012 a landmark agreement on energy policy that will deliver a durable, long term signal to investors. It committed to take powers through the Energy Bill to set a decarbonisation target range for 2030 in secondary legislation, and that a decision on whether to exercise that power would be taken in 2016, after the Committee on Climate Change has provided advice on the Fifth Carbon Budget.

Legislative proposal:

The provisions enable the Secretary of State to set a decarbonisation target range for 2030 or subsequent years, and specify that a target range may not be set before the Government sets the Fifth Carbon Budget, for the years 2028-2032. The Devolved Administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales must be consulted before a range is set, and the Secretary of State must also take into account a number of factors before setting a target, including scientific knowledge about climate change and economic circumstances.

Once a decarbonisation target range has been set, the Secretary of State would have a duty to ensure that the carbon intensity of electricity generation in the United Kingdom is no greater than the upper end of the decarbonisation target range.

Background:

The Government's commitment follows the recommendation by the Committee on Climate Change that a target should be set for 2030. The Government will not set any such target until 2016, when the Fifth Carbon Budget is due to be set, covering 2028-2032, so that the decarbonisation target range can be considered alongside the overall pathway of the economy towards 2050, and the interaction between the power sector and other parts of the economy such as heat and transport.