

Climate emergency – model motion (updated Jan 2020)

This (branch/region/committee/trades council/union/conference) notes the urgent need for action on the climate emergency, both in response to existing negative impacts such as extreme weather, fires, droughts, floods and loss of habitat and species; and to avoid the catastrophic and irreversible climate damage which people increasingly realise the world is on course for, after the 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report.

We recognise that big business, the military and the richest individuals are responsible for the vast majority of climate change, yet the global working class and poor are disproportionately at risk. A just transition (that protects the lives, livelihoods and rights of the working class, poor and disadvantaged) to a decarbonised economy is not only right, but is the only way the movement against climate chaos will secure the mass support needed to win, and avoid a rich minority protecting themselves at the expense of the planet and the vast majority of people.

We congratulate the school students striking around the world for real climate action and welcome the decision of the TUC to support them and call for a solidarity stoppage. We note that many workers did strike on 20 September 2019, despite Britain's repressive legislation, by campaigning to pressure employers not to apply sanctions to climate strikers.

We note that there is discussion about the possibility of making Friday 1 May 2020, traditionally International Workers' Day, also a climate strike. We note that the UN 'COP' climate change conferences have become a major focus for campaigners, that COP26 will be taking place in Glasgow from 9-20 November 2020, and that many organisations are already making plans.

We resolve to:

1. Publicly state our support and solidarity with the climate strikers and the wider movement for rapid and effective climate action
2. Invite climate strikers to speak at our meeting
3. Educate our members about the climate emergency
4. Give practical support to the climate strikes, without adults taking it over. This will include asking schools, local authorities and academy chains to commit to imposing no sanctions against striking students, promoting the strikes on social media, encouraging members to attend, taking our flags or banner if agreed with the strikers. If requested, it could include co-hosting events, providing sound systems, staging and stewards, using our public liability insurance, help with press releases or police liaison.
5. Support workers joining climate strikes and maximise member involvement

6. Work with other local labour movement and environmental organisations to arrange discussions locally and within workplaces about practically how workers and unions can learn from 20 September, join climate strikes or show solidarity
7. Promote through the labour and climate movements the idea of making 1 May 2020 a climate strike as well as International Workers' Day
8. Organise to make COP26 in Glasgow, 9-20 November 2020, a major focus of campaigning for effective action on the climate emergency
9. Call on employers and local authorities to declare a climate emergency and involve workers and communities in planning, implementing and monitoring to rapidly achieve zero carbon emissions, including ending investments in fossil fuels
10. Call on employers to recognise union green/environmental reps and give them work time for their activities
11. Create climate action groups at workplace level and within union structures
12. Look for opportunities for unions, communities and the climate movement to work together, for example for improved housing and public transport
13. Call on unions and the TUC to back the climate strikes, call and build action
14. Call on our union to carry out a major exercise to understand the potential positive and negative impacts of the climate crisis and responses to it on employment
15. Campaign for a legal right to strike and to repeal all legislation that makes it harder to strike over climate
16. Discuss what climate-related demands to include in collective bargaining, including ones which could be the basis of a lawful "trade dispute" under current legislation and to call on our union to produce guidance on this
17. Ensure that unions are visible as relevant and useful organisations within the climate movement and that participants are encouraged to join a union
18. Demand massive public investment in the jobs required to address climate emergency, including massive improvements in renewable energy, housing and public transport
19. Demand support for people coping with or fleeing the consequences of climate breakdown, whether internally within the UK or from abroad
20. Send this motion to our local trades union council, up through our union structure, and to the local Labour Party