

Stop Burning Trees Coalition: Guide to Meeting with Your MP

Influencing your MP

An MP has tens of thousands of constituents, and many political issues competing for their attention. How can we make them pause to look at the bigger picture and recognise that climate change should be high on their priorities?

One of the most effective things to do is actually to go and see your MP. Many MPs hold regular sessions called surgeries where they meet with constituents to talk about issues of concern. Your MP's website, or your local library, may have more information about when and where surgeries are taking place. Otherwise please contact your MP's office to enquire about surgeries. For more details on how to contact your MP see:

www.parliament.uk/get-involved/contact-an-mp-or-lord/contact-your-mp/

Do your research about your MP

It's important to understand their perspective: if you can approach from an angle they are already sympathetic with, there is a much higher chance of getting your message across. You can find out what they have been saying in Parliament at www.theyworkforyou.com, Google for media appearances, and some MPs' Twitter accounts are also very informative.

Key points to look for:

- Do they have an official position within the government?
- Are they on any Select Committees?
- What are their passions?
- Have they made any statements on the environment generally?
- Can you find a way to relate the issue to anything locally? (e.g. false claims about job creation, air pollution, wasting bill payers money during a cost of living crisis)

What are the key messages to get across?

- The new subsidies granted to Drax are a disaster for bill payers, forests, communities and our planet
- Drax is the UK's single largest carbon emitter, burning roughly the equivalent of 25 million trees per year - this does not help us decarbonise
- Burning woody biomass emits as much or more carbon than coal
- Adding carbon capture technology to Drax's tree burning would not help us reach our Net Zero goals, even if the technology worked (which it doesn't)
- Green subsidies should be going to genuine renewables and real climate action that would bring down bills and emissions

Plan (with others if you can)

If you know others in your area who are concerned about this issue in particular - or can find allies from other environmental campaigns prepared to come along with you, it can be beneficial to see your MP with a group of constituents. Don't worry if you can't find anyone to join you, you can still make a big impact alone!

If you are going with others it's worth considering:

- Who is going to ask what question?
- What are your individual strengths? For example one person might be an 'expert', another good at staying calm under pressure, another be someone the MP might not see as a 'usual suspect'.

If you're going alone then it's worth having a think in advance about:

- What order do you want to raise things?
- What are the key things that you think will resonate with your particular MP that you want to make sure you have time to include?
- Are there any areas of the key messages you feel a bit unsure of?

During the meeting

Listen first. Don't leap in with the most controversial issue, try to find some common ground and build on that. Can you frame it so the MP can be your ally?

Then try to make your arguments using their language and values. In many cases this will be the first time that anyone has spoken to your MP about this issue face to face. Allow them to feel like you are helping inform their position, rather than arguing against an assumption of what they already think. Acknowledge concerns they raise rather than dismissing them out of hand. Then you can present alternative viewpoints.

It can be incredibly frustrating when people don't 'get it'. But to persuade you need to be persuasive, hectoring or getting angry will simply turn people away from what you are trying to get across to them. Your passion when talking is important, but one must not be so passionate that the message is lost.

Make the MP feel that they would not be going out on a limb by doing the action you are asking for or supporting your campaign. We like to know that people like us already agree with an argument - most of the political parties do not support large-scale burning trees for electricity, nor does the public!

Take some notes with you including the key points you want to express, and relevant evidence or arguments to back it up.

If you can, ask your MP to commit to doing something before the meeting is over. This could be asking a question in Parliament or writing to the Government. You might like to ask your MP for a photo together which you can share on social media or send to your local paper.

Right now our main ask to MPs is that they write to Ed Miliband, the Secretary of State for the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero to express their concerns about the new subsidies granted to Drax and to oppose any new subsidies for adding carbon capture to Drax's tree burning operations.

If you need any support thinking about what the best thing to ask your MP is please contact stopburningtreescoalition@gmail.com.

Answers for tricky questions

Q: But the Government has recognised concerns, and halved subsidies for Drax post-2027?

A: Sadly in reality this is not the case. The new strike price set for Drax's post-2027 subsidies is very high, nearly twice that of wind and solar. Estimates suggest that Drax will receive around £1.8 billion from 2027-31 - which is not far off their current subsidy arrangement and puts added strain on bill payers. We can't know exactly how much Drax will receive as we don't know what energy prices will be in 2027. While it is good the Government has recognised some concerns, the new subsidy arrangements mean Drax will still be receiving huge amounts of bill payer money.

Q: The Government has recognised concerns over Drax's supply chain emissions and sourcing, and increased sustainability requirements to ensure 100% of biomass burnt under the subsidy arrangement is 'sustainable' and excludes primary and old-growth forests.

A: Drax has already been claiming that it's been burning nearly 100% (98%) sustainable biomass, and the primary forests sourced from Canada were certified under the existing sustainability verification scheme. Without clear changes which the Government has not set out, we cannot trust that Drax won't continue burning vital forests. The criteria also doesn't account for the vital biodiverse forests in the Southern US, or the impacts on communities being polluted by Drax's wood pellet production.

The new levels on supply chain emissions don't actually make any difference, as they're set higher than Drax's current supply chain emissions and about 4x the rate set out in 2018 for new subsidies. None of these changes actually do anything to address the issues, and they all make the fundamental mistake of assuming burning trees is low carbon - when it emits just as much carbon as coal!

Q: But without Drax, we wouldn't have energy security and would risk the lights going off in high demand times?

A: Actually, research by E3G shows that we can reach 2030 decarbonisation targets and keep the lights on without Drax - and it's the cheapest option! The Government also hasn't yet extended support for smaller biomass generators in the UK, sourcing genuinely waste wood. It makes no sense to continue subsidising Drax when we have other better, cheaper options.

After the event

After your meeting, it's a good idea to contact your MP to thank them for meeting you and to provide them with any relevant information.

This is also an opportunity to share any follow up materials, like the [BBC Panorama investigations](#), the [E3G report](#) or the MP briefing.

Remind them of any action they said they'd take and say you'd like to contact them again in a week or two to check their response.

Resources

[August 2025 MP Briefing](#)

[In depth overview of the issue](#)

