



The new Infrastructure Planning Commission [IPC] - the body created by the Government to make decisions on applications for nationally significant projects such as power stations and large waste incinerators - opens its doors to applications on Monday 1 March.

The IPC will make its decisions in accordance with policies set out by the Government in a number of National Policy Statements - which have yet to be finally approved. But Friends of the Earth has major concerns about the draft National Policy Statements on energy, which it calls "fundamentally flawed", and wrote to the Government in January warning that it could face a judicial review unless they are significantly changed.

Among the concerns raised by the environmental campaigning charity is the failure to instruct the IPC to consider the carbon impacts of applications that come before it. Friends of the Earth says it is essential that the IPC and Committee on Climate Change, the Government's official climate change advisor, work together to ensure that our energy sector rapidly reduces its carbon impact in line with legally-binding UK carbon budgets.

Friends of the Earth also says the new fast-track process does not safeguard communities' rights to be heard - it is extremely technical and does not give them a meaningful role in the decision-making process.

More info at: http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/press_releases/nps_22012010.html 5 MARCH 2010

FRIDAY

SECOND READING OF SUPERMARKETS OMBUDSMAN IN PARLIAMENT

After eight years of campaigning by Friends of the Earth and two Competition Commission investigations, the Government has finally accepted the need for a supermarket watchdog to stamp out bullying practices and get a fairer deal for farmers and suppliers. But there is a real risk that the Ombudsman will be weakened and watered down on the back of lobbying by the major retailers. This Private Members Bill is a crucial tool to show wider public and parliamentary support for a fairer food chain.

More info at:

http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/press_releases/code_of_practice_ombudsman_04022010.html

DATE TBC, MARCH 2010

DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESPOND TO COMPETITION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION THAT SUPERMARKETS SHOULD FACE A 'COMPETITION TEST'

A 'competition test' could make it harder for supermarkets to obtain planning permission for new outlets in areas where they already have a strong presence.

It could slow the increase of 'Tesco towns' - areas where most of the major food outlets are

owned by Tesco. However Friends of the Earth believes that tougher planning policies are needed to support local shops and a more diverse grocery market.

MONDAY 8 MARCH 2010

DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT PUBLISHES LOW-CARBON TRANSPORT DELIVERY PLAN

This implementation plan will set out how the Government intends to reduce carbon emissions from transport through new technology, fuels, market mechanisms and changes in travel behaviour. It follows the July 2009 publication of the Low- Carbon Transport Strategy, available at:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/carbonreduction/low-carbon.pdf> .

Friends of Earth wants the Government to commit to a roll out of 'smarter travel choices' across England to encourage people to switch to greener transport alternatives to cars, such as walking, cycling and bus journeys.

TBC - THURSDAY 25 MARCH 2010

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE IS EXPECTED TO PUBLISH PROVISIONAL ESTIMATES OF UK GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IN 2009.

A year ago estimated figures for 2008 showed that greenhouse gas emissions had fallen slightly. But Friends of the Earth argued that this reflected economic challenges rather than the Government's climate change strategy.

More information at:

http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/press_releases/emissions_26032009.html 25 - FRIDAY 26

MARCH 2010

THURSDAY

EU LEADERS COUNCIL, BRUSSELS

EU Heads of State convene in Brussels. Climate change could be on the agenda.

THURSDAY 1 APRIL 2010

THE GOVERNMENT'S FEED-IN TARIFF SCHEME, OR CLEAN ENERGY CASH-BACK STARTS

The new scheme - which Friends of the Earth led the campaign for - will give cash payments to homes, businesses and communities for generating green electricity.

Although Friends of the Earth wanted a more ambitious scheme than the one that will be introduced, the organisation believes that it will provide a real financial incentive for many and should lead to the introduction of more small- scale renewable energy schemes.

Background information on feed-in tariffs and case studies of businesses and households who are making use of the new scheme are available from the press office.

MONDAY 31 MAY - FRIDAY 11 JUNE 2010

UNFCCC MEETING, BONN

This the first significant meeting of The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change since the UN climate talks in Copenhagen in December 2009. The meeting marks the half way point between Copenhagen and Cancun, Mexico, where the talks will reconvene in November this year.

FRIDAY 25 - SUNDAY 27 JUNE 2010

G20 HEADS OF STATE MEETING, TORONTO

Heads of State from the 20 most important economies will meet in Toronto to discuss the most pressing economic issues. Climate change could be on the agenda.