



JULY 2025 NEWSLETTER



With record heatwaves in the last few weeks, it's hard to see how anyone can deny that the climate is changing, with dramatic impacts on the environment as well as on human health and well-being. As we said when we joined the Mass Lobby of Parliament, it's time for **REAL CHANGE** to the scale of government action on climate change and the natural environment.

LOBBY OF PARLIAMENT 9 JULY



Several supporters of [Humanist Climate Action took part in the Mass Lobby of Parliament](#) on Wednesday 9 July, organised by The Climate Coalition and urged MPs to take effective action on the climate and nature. Here are some of us – including a canine humanist – before we went off to talk to our individual MPs.

The main message from MPs? Keep writing to them! They can't reply to every letter or email, but they keep track of numbers, and it's important for them to be able to say that large numbers of their constituents are greatly concerned about climate change and the need to protect the natural environment.

You can read the [press release about HCA's participation in the Lobby](#).

HUMANISTS UK CONVENTION 2025



It was good to meet so many people who came to visit our stall at the Humanists UK Convention in Sheffield last month. We had a lot of stimulating conversations, and we enjoyed challenging visitors to take our quiz and check how well informed they are on environmental issues. (We were impressed with the results!)

At the stall we asked people to send letters to their MPs and we're repeating the suggestion here. Please visit the Humanists UK website for a [sample letter](#) which you can adapt as you see fit, and send it to your MP to call on them to stand up for the environment.

PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE BILL



Another action we have taken recently is to write to the Government to express our criticism of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill which is currently making its way through Parliament. The Bill has been described by the Government as 'a win-win for the economy and for nature', which will both accelerate building development and drive nature recovery. However, in common with many other environmental groups, we believe that it will have the opposite effect on nature recovery, making it easier for planners and developers to override environmental protections.

Particularly concerning is the proposal for the creation of high-level Environmental Delivery Plans which would, for certain kinds of development, enable developers to pay a Nature Restoration Levy rather than being required to avoid environmental damage. At present, developers are expected to follow what is known as the 'mitigation hierarchy' in their approach to environmental impact – if possible, avoid negative effects, otherwise minimise or mitigate them, and only then, if that's not possible, offset and compensate for the damage by creating new habitats elsewhere. The proposals in the Bill would enable them to go straight to offsetting – and let them off the hook.

The Bill has passed its Third Reading in the Commons and is now in the House of Lords, but the Lords may propose their own amendments and there is still time for the Government to change its mind.

THE WEIRD AND WONDERFUL ECONOMICS OF RENEWABLES



For the world to transition to low-carbon electricity, energy from these sources needs to be cheaper than electricity from fossil fuels.

Fossil fuels dominate the global power supply because, until very recently, electricity from fossil fuels was far cheaper than electricity from renewables. This has dramatically changed within the last decade. In most places in the world, power from new renewables is now cheaper than power from new fossil fuels.

The costs of fossil fuels and nuclear power depend largely on two factors, the price of the fuel that they burn and the power plant's operating costs. Renewable energy plants are different: their operating costs are comparatively low and they don't have to pay for any fuel. Their fuel doesn't have to be dug out of the ground, the fuel – the wind and sunlight – comes to them. What is determining the cost of renewable power is the cost of the power plant, the cost of the technology itself.

The fundamental driver of the price reduction is that renewable energy technologies follow learning curves. The learning curve applies to technologies that become cheaper with increasing production. They enter a virtuous cycle where more deployment leads to demand increases which result in prices falling and the technology becoming competitive in new markets. The result is that with each doubling of the cumulative installed capacity their price declines by the same fraction. For solar PV modules, with each doubling of the installed capacity, the price of solar modules reduces by 20.2%. This impact meant that the cost of solar modules decreased by 99.6% between 1976 and 2019. Lithium ion battery

technology has also benefited from learning curve economics. In 1992 battery storage cost \$6,035 per kWh. By 2016 the price per kWh was \$244 with a capacity increase of 50,000. Prices declined by an average of 18.9% for every doubling of capacity.

The price of electricity from fossil fuel sources, however, does not follow learning curves, so we should expect that the price difference between expensive fossil fuels and cheap renewables will become even larger in the future.

This is a powerful argument for large investments into scaling up renewable technologies now. Increasing installed capacity has the important positive consequence that it drives down the price and thereby makes renewable energy sources more attractive earlier. In the coming years most of the additional demand for new electricity will come from low- and middle-income countries; we have the opportunity now to ensure that much of the new power supply will be provided by low-carbon sources.

In this global context falling energy prices also mean that people's real incomes rise. Investments to scale up energy production with cheap electric power from renewable sources are therefore not only an opportunity to reduce emissions but also to achieve more economic growth – particularly for the poorest places in the world.

For those interested in understanding more about this subject I recommend accessing [the Our World in Data site](#). It has a comprehensive explanation and very clear visuals of the concept of the learning curve for renewables, and explains why it does not apply to fossil fuels. For anyone wishing to debate with those sceptical about renewables it provides a very powerful and positive alternative view.

Pauline Element

This article is a summary based on an article by Max Roser (2020), "Why did renewables become so cheap so fast?", published online at OurWorldinData.org. Retrieved from: <https://ourworldindata.org/cheap-renewables-growth> [Online Resource]

ONE SMALL STEP

Continuing our series on simple actions we can all take



Blocked sinks - a gadget that works?

I guess most of us are trying to reduce the use of chemicals in our homes. Sometimes that is easier said than done and in desperation we use products we know are harmful. So I was interested in a gadget that is recommended by *Which* magazine that is effective at removing hair blockages from bathroom sinks without any chemicals. *Which* described the Flexisnake as chemical-free and effective and said it was quick and easy to use. It is washable so can be reused and is ideal for the eco-responsible consumer.

Pauline Element

KEEP IN TOUCH

We welcome feedback and responses to HCA newsletters. We aim to exemplify the humanist commitment to rational discussion and debate. You can contact us at climateaction@humanists.uk. All newsletters to date can be found on the [Humanist Climate Action website](#). We aim to produce a newsletter every two months.

As always, all signed contributions to the newsletter represent simply the views of the individual writers and are not necessarily endorsed by either Humanist Climate Action or Humanists UK.