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To: All Branches

Dear Colleagues,

Global Day Of Climate Action – 'Fridays For Future (FFF)' - Friday 25 September 2020:

'Fridays For Future (FFF)'

'Fridays For Future (FFF)', is a global climate change movement that started in August 2018, when 15-year-old Greta Thunberg began a school strike for climate change in Sweden. In the three weeks leading up to the Swedish election, she sat outside Swedish Parliament every school day, demanding urgent action on the climate crisis. She was tired of society's unwillingness to see the climate crisis for what it is - 'a crisis'. She was joined by others and numbers grew leading to a school strike until the Swedish policies provided a safe pathway to keep global warming under 2°C, in line with the Paris Agreement. This marked the beginning of a global movement and their call for action sparked an international awakening, with students and activists uniting around the globe to join the campaign and organise protests. 'Fridays for Future' is part of a hopeful new wave of change, inspiring millions of people to wake up to the threat of climate change to the world's future.

We live in the midst of a pandemic, but climate change is just as much of a crisis as it was before. During the last few months, the Covid-19 pandemic has forced activists to find new ways of protest and use digital activism to demand climate action, as marches have not been appropriate. Friday the 25th of September will be a focal point and the first global action day of the year.

The coming months and years will be crucial in ensuring a safe pathway to achieving a below 1.5°C increase in global mean temperature, a target stated in the Paris Agreement.

If the world is to minimise the risks of triggering irreversible chain reactions beyond human control, action is needed now. The FFF's 'Friday For Future' day is designed to reinforce that vital message - that the climate crisis mustn't get forgotten in the shadow of the Coronavirus/Covid-19 pandemic but must remain being regarded as a priority. 'Fridays For Future' aims to raise awareness and keep campaigning and protesting as long as exploitation of nature is allowed to continue. This year, during the pandemic and to prevent the spread of the virus, where physical protest is inappropriate, the campaign instead will turn to digital action.

"Fridays For Future (FFF)" state that no effective measures have been taken to lower worldwide greenhouse gas emissions in a sustainable and just manner as yet. In a statement launching the 'Global Day of Climate Action' the message from "Fridays For Future (FFF)" was "To actually experience the climate crisis makes you understand the urgency of the situation. Millions are losing their homes and livelihoods, this can no longer exist in a vacuum. We need world leaders to prioritise humanity over greed. The youth are going to come together, over and over again – each time more strategic and united than ever before".

The Paris Agreement:

The Paris Agreement sets out a global framework to avoid dangerous climate change by limiting global warming to well below 2°C and pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5°C. It also aims to strengthen countries' ability to deal with the impacts of climate change and support them in their efforts. This is an agreement within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), dealing with greenhouse-gas-emissions mitigation, adaptation, and finance, signed in 2015 with 196 [Signatories](#). Under the Paris Agreement, each country must determine, plan, and regularly report on the contribution that it undertakes to mitigate [global warming](#). The Paris deal is the world's first comprehensive climate agreement.

Governments agreed to come together every 5 years to assess the collective progress towards the long-term goals and inform Parties in updating and enhancing their nationally determined contributions, to report to each other and the public on how they are implementing climate action and to track progress towards their commitments under the Agreement through a robust transparency and accountability system.

Earlier this year 189 UNFCCC signatories met for Governments to submit long-term climate 2050 plans as well as shorter-term 2030 goals. The long-term 2050 goals are to decarbonise their economies, and to set shorter term targets lasting until 2030. The only significant countries that are emitters of airborne toxins which were not party to this were [Iran](#) and [Turkey](#).

EU's role

The EU has been at the forefront of international efforts to fight climate change. It was instrumental in brokering the Paris Agreement and continues to show global leadership. The EU's nationally determined contribution (NDC) under the Paris Agreement is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% by 2030 compared to 1990, under its wider [2030 climate and energy framework](#). All key EU legislation for implementing this target was adopted by the end of 2018.

Global [carbon dioxide emissions](#) by jurisdiction.

- China (29.4%)
- United States (14.3%)
- European Economic Area (9.8%)
- India (6.8%)
- Russia (4.9%)
- Japan (3.5%)
- Other (31.3%)

USA Position

On June 1, 2017, the US president announced that the USA would cease all participation in the [2015 Paris Agreement](#) on [climate change mitigation](#), and begin negotiations to re-enter the agreement "on terms that are fair to the United States, its businesses, its workers, its people, its taxpayers," or form a new agreement adding that the Paris accord will undermine (the U.S.) economy," and "puts (the U.S.) at a permanent disadvantage. Trump stated that the withdrawal would be in accordance with his [America First](#) policy. In accordance with [Article 28 of the Paris Agreement](#), a country cannot give notice of withdrawal from the agreement before three years of its start date in the relevant country, which was on November 4, 2016 in the

case of the United States. On November 4, 2019, the administration gave a formal notice of intention to withdraw, which takes 12 months to take effect. So, the earliest possible effective withdrawal date by the United States cannot be before November 4, 2020, four years after the Agreement came into effect in the United States and one day after the [2020 U.S. presidential election](#).

Climate Change Linked to Natural \$1bn-plus disasters Last Year

With increasing global surface temperatures, the possibility of more droughts and increased intensity of storms will likely occur. As more water vapour is evaporated into the atmosphere it becomes fuel for more powerful storms to develop. The British charity [Christian Aid reported](#) that climate change amplified 15 extreme weather disasters which caused human devastation and at least a billion dollars in damage in each case, and seven of the events cost over \$10 billion each. The charity state that the great tragedy of climate change is that it is the poorest and most vulnerable who suffer the most, despite doing the least to cause it. However as the disasters have shown, no continent is immune from global warming and its impacts as extreme weather including floods, storms, droughts and wildfires struck every inhabited continent in the past year, causing devastation and loss of life:

- Australian Bushfires destroyed 700 homes (\$100 billion)
- [California wildfires](#) laid waste to farming areas. (\$25 billion),
- [Typhoons Hagibis and Faxai in Japan](#) (\$15 billion)
- [Flooding in the American Midwest](#) (\$12.5 billion).
- Cyclone Idai (\$2 billion) - and ultimately cost 1,300 lives in southern Africa.
- Cyclone Fani struck India and Bangladesh killing 1,900 (\$18 billion)
- Hurricane Dorian hit the US east coast killing 673. (\$11 billion)
- Typhoon Lekima in China (\$10 billion)
- Flooding in China (\$10 billion)
- This year over 7 tornados hit the US with devastation, deaths and floods (\$11 billion)
- Floods in Argentina and Uruguay in January this year forced 11,000 people from their homes.

Environmental Defence Fund (EDF)

The Environmental Defence Fund (EDF) based in the USA state that scientists are detecting a stronger link between the planet's warming and its changing weather pattern. They say that though it can be hard to pinpoint whether climate change intensified a particular weather event, the trajectory is clear — hotter, dangerous, heat waves, drier droughts, bigger storm surges and greater snowfall. Higher temperatures also boost evaporation, which dries out the soil in summer — intensifying drought over many areas. As more evaporation leads to more moisture in the atmosphere, rainfall intensifies. For example, the rainfall from Hurricane Harvey was 15 percent more intense and three times as likely to occur due to human-induced climate change. The EDF state that we can expect to see a higher frequency of Category 4 and 5 storms, also, as temperatures continue to rise. Clouds that can dump a lot of rain are more common in a warmer atmosphere.

While scientists aren't certain about whether climate change has led to more hurricanes, they are confident that rising sea levels are leading to [higher storm surges and more floods](#). Around half of sea-level rise since 1900 comes from the expansion of warming oceans, triggered by human-caused global warming. (Like all liquids, water generally expands as it heats up.) The rest of the rise comes from melting glaciers and ice sheets. There is more moisture in a warmer atmosphere, which can lead to record snowfall and may be linked to climate change. Scientists are studying a possible connection between a warming Arctic and cold spells in the eastern United States. The idea is that a rapidly warming Arctic can weaken the jet stream, allowing frigid polar air to travel farther south.

ClientEarth

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[ClientEarth](#) and other environmental organisations are this month calling on members of the European Parliament to support ambitious measures in new EU climate laws, including an emission reduction target of 65%.

They are also challenging Europe's largest and most climate-damaging power plant, this week launching a legal challenge against Europe's largest power plant, Belchatow and two of its mines. Belchatow is a giant Coal plant in Central Poland, burning 45 million tonnes of lignite, the dirtiest form of coal, every year – an entire tonne every second.

Earlier this year ClientEarth in combination with residents, other environmental organisations and Polish farmers won a long legal battle to block the building of a new coal fired power station at Polnoc in Poland, after a ruling from the Polish Supreme Administrative Court.

ClientEarth lawyers have also launched a court fight to block a major new coal mine in Poland. The Zloczew open-cast mine would be Poland's deepest ever and, for the first time, use explosives to access the lignite (the dirtiest form of [coal](#)) beneath the surface. The process is set to displace seven billion tonnes of rock, putting the surrounding area at major risk of tremors – as well as serious water and [air pollution](#). A project of state-owned energy company PGE, the Zloczew mine would result in the displacement and destruction of 33 villages, including highly specialised modern farms, homes, schools, shops, chapels and fire stations.

Greener Jobs Alliance

The Greener Jobs Alliance (GJA) was formed as a partnership body inclusive of trade unions, student organisations, campaigning groups and a policy think tank. It campaigns around the issue of jobs and the skills needed to transition to a low-carbon economy. The founding members of the GJA are the University and College Union, Trades Union Congress, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, National Union of Students, People & Planet, and the Institute of Public Policy Research. The GJA promotes skills training and job creation to meet the needs of Britain's rapidly growing low carbon sectors and to green the whole economy.

The transition to a low carbon and resource efficient economy can drive sustainable economic recovery and job creation in every part of the country as well as making existing jobs more secure. But this requires a more strategic national and local approach to deliver the workforce skills needed and to stimulate demand for clean energy and energy efficiency services.

The Greener Jobs Alliance liaises at a national and local level to build the broadest possible support for the policies, investment, partnerships and commitments needed to drive the transition to a low carbon economy. The Greener Jobs Alliance liaises with training bodies, colleges, universities, employers, local and national government, trade unions, housing associations, campaign and community groups – to build the policies, investment and partnerships needed to drive the transition to a low carbon economy.

The GJA runs a number of 'free' courses on the environment for Trade Union Reps in different parts of the UK which have been attended by a number of CWU Reps.

The GJA came into existence as a result of funding from Battersea and Wandsworth TUC. The GJA Newsletter editor is Graham Petersen, also the GJA Secretary. Graham is well known to the CWU and has a long standing working relationship with the Union. He is a former TUC tutor and course designer who created Safety Reps' training courses. He was the head of the Trade Union Studies Centre at South Thames College before retirement from the post. The GJA has a close working relationship with the CWU Health, Safety & Environment Department and CWU Safety Reps.

The Trade Union Clean Air Network (TUCAN)

The Trade Union Clean Air Network (TUCAN), has been set up to push for workers and trade unions to have greater recognition on air pollution issues. Alongside the dangers of climate

change has been the damage caused by the unhealthy air that we breathe. With contaminants such as nitrous oxide, particulate matter from diesel fumes, ground level ozone and dusts such as silica from construction work, plastics and rubber, the workforce is being exposed to a toxic cocktail. This includes those who work in offices or shops with pollution that seeps into their workplace air, outdoor workers, and for the millions of workers commuting as part of their jobs.

TUCAN calls for all local, regional, national and international air pollution policies to include a commitment to address the occupational health dangers to both outdoor and indoor workers. Unions must be consulted on the risks and control measures needed. TUCAN's Air pollution campaign is based on workers' and unions' input as the only way to ensure that any changes made won't diminish the standard of living of anyone affected now or into the future. This type of change is called just transition and is necessary to ensure workers and their families don't suffer the consequences from bad air or solutions that unfairly penalise them and to prevent workers and communities being dumped into economic misery in the name of progress. The Greener Jobs Alliance has produced an on-line training package on 'Just Transition.' TUCAN also has close working links with the CWU Health, Safety and Environment Department and CWU Safety Reps.

TUC and the CBI Urge Government to Invest in Creation of a Million New Green Jobs

Both the TUC and the CBI are urging the government to invest now to create over a million new green jobs in response to rising unemployment and the COVID-19 crisis. As the Tories' 'furlough scheme' comes to an end, the TUC is calling for a new 'Job Protection' and 'Upskilling' Plan. New support for businesses must come with strings attached, unions say, to promote decent work, protect jobs and give union rights. Meanwhile, the CBI, the employers' organisation, says we face 'two seemingly separate yet fundamental problems: Covid-19 – the biggest health crisis in living memory – and climate change, the defining challenge of the modern era.'

Earlier this year, on 21 July, Prime Minister Johnson announced a £350m 'green funding package' to support efforts to drive down carbon emissions from heavy industry, construction, space and transport. He said it would "fuel a green, sustainable recovery from the Covid-19 crisis." He added, "We've made great strides towards our net zero target over the last year."

Meanwhile, out in the real world, the Committee on Climate Change says meagre progress has been made over the last year to build the foundations for the transition to a net zero emissions economy. Exhausted from trying to get the Prime Minister to act, the government's independent advisers have now resorted to direct appeals to Ministers. On 8 July, the Chancellor announced a £3 billion 'green stimulus' package. But analysis reveals that the package provides a fraction of what's required for a national home insulation programme. It is far less than for new road building, and is dwarfed by similar efforts in France and Germany. Johnson's latest £350m pledge comes in small packages that innovators must bid for. Many of the projects are, of course, essential for a green future: £10m for work on more efficient electric motors; developing recyclable steel; innovative, greener materials in heavy industry; clean hydrogen power that doesn't rely on methane for the hydrogen; and scaling up carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology. But competitive bids for small innovation packages is no substitute for government-led equity stakes in key businesses and technologies. Ministers Gavin Williamson MP (Education) and Alok Sharma MP (Business and Energy) have each had letters from the Greener Jobs Alliance asking how they intend to ensure green skills are mainstreamed into their departmental strategies.

TUC Report – "How to plan fair and successful paths to net zero emissions"

The TUC strongly supports the UK government target of a 'net zero carbon' economy by 2050, but we believe that meeting it requires a reset of the way we live and work, developing new, innovative industrial sectors and providing new jobs. Recognising that climate change is the most pressing existential threat facing the planet, the TUC has produced a report 'Voice and

Place: How to plan fair and successful paths to net zero emissions' which demonstrates the expert knowledge of trade union full time and lay officials, using that knowledge to provide practical and achievable policy recommendations whilst also highlighting, yet again, why trade union voice should become an established feature of UK industrial policy, as it is in the industrial policies of so many of our continental neighbours on how to achieve a just transition to a net zero economy across the regions and nations.

Read the Report here:- https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-08/Just%20Transition%20final_Content%20Updated_MN%20%281%29.pdf

Wales TUC Report – 'A Green Recovery and a Just Transition'

In their report, '[A green recovery and a just transition](#)' the Wales TUC call for a massive economic stimulus and set out a plan to achieve a 'just transition' to a net-zero economy for workers and communities in Wales. Building the recovery from Coronavirus represents a once in a generation challenge. But it is also an opportunity to take the urgent action needed to build a greener and fairer economy in Wales. One that protects jobs, our health and the planet. Workers must have a central voice in planning the recovery and the transition to a net-zero economy to ensure this happens. The report sets out a five-point plan for a 'just transition' to net-zero, calling for:

- A clear and funded pathway to net-zero that maximises the opportunities to protect and create jobs in Wales.
- The workers most affected by the move to a net-zero economy to be given a central voice in planning the transition.
- All new jobs in the green economy to offer 'fair work' with good pay, skills, pensions, health and safety and trade union recognition.
- Workplace 'transition agreements' to be agreed between employers and unions to ensure a fair transition. Also support for union-led sustainability initiatives in every workplace.
- Increased funding for learning and skills to prepare workers for the transition and provide a clear pathway to new jobs.

[Research recently carried out for the Wales TUC by Transition Economics](#) shows that almost 60,000 jobs could be created in Wales in the next two years through government investment in key infrastructure projects. **Read the Report here:- <https://www.tuc.org.uk/green>**

Links – Further Information:

"Fridays For Future(FFF)" Website For Further Information:- <https://fridaysforfuture.org/september25/>

Environmental Defence Fund:- <https://www.edf.org>

ClientEarth:- <https://www.clientearth.org/climate/>

Greener Jobs Alliance (GJA):- <http://www.greenerjobsalliance.co.uk/>

Trade Union Clean Air Network (TUCAN):- <http://www.greenerjobsalliance.co.uk/air-pollution/>

Yours sincerely



**Dave Joyce
National Health, Safety & Environment Officer**