



# Great British Energy Bill: Nature recovery

## Briefing for Lords Report Stage

This briefing is on behalf of environmental coalition [Wildlife and Countryside Link](#) ahead of Report Stage in the House of Lords of the Great British Energy Bill on 11 February 2025.

6 February 2025

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We welcome the Government amendment to the Great British Energy Bill tabled by Lord Hunt and Baroness Hayman, requiring Great British Energy to keep under review the impact of its activities on the achievement of sustainable development.<sup>1</sup>

**We urge the Government to clarify at the despatch box that the achievement of sustainable development includes contributing to delivery of Climate Change Act 2008 and Environment Act 2021 targets.**

### The role of Great British Energy in contributing to nature and climate targets

Sustainable development is a useful but vague term about delivering for environment, social and economic considerations. Great British Energy will have an important role in mitigating climate change by building and investing in renewable energy infrastructure – it should do this in a way that also delivers for climate adaptation and nature’s recovery.

Peers have made a strong case during the passage of this Bill for why GB Energy should contribute to nature and climate targets. The infrastructure development necessary to make the UK a “clean energy superpower” will entail substantial risks for ecosystems as well as opportunities for environmental enhancement, if those considerations are properly included in project planning.

GB Energy should invest in clean energy projects that meet the highest environmental standards, embed wildlife-friendly design into renewable energy project design, and create more space for nature on development sites. As Baroness Young put it during Committee Stage: *“We want to achieve the strategic climate objectives that Great British Energy is there to deliver but we also want to achieve other objectives—it is both/and, rather than either/or.”*<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/58528/documents/5891>

<sup>2</sup> <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2024-12-17/debates/279BF706-1C3A-4FB7-B4FA-F600A025C0FC/GreatBritishEnergyBill#contribution-22FECACB-0FBC-4B6A-BD2C-BB1D39D707C2>



The Government should clarify that sustainable development means that GB Energy must do what it reasonably can within its means to contribute to the achievement of climate mitigation targets set under the Climate Change Act 2008 and biodiversity targets set under the Environment Act 2021. Reference to specific targets, rather than generalised environmental considerations, will enable more efficient project planning, enabling trade-offs to be analysed and minimised, and co-benefits maximised.

This would align with the approach taken by the Government to the Crown Estate Bill, where the Government gave the Crown Estate a new sustainable development duty and usefully clarified what this new duty should entail.

The Minister Lord Livermore said at Report Stage of the Crown Estate Bill on 5 November 2024: *“The public framework document will also make it clear that this regard includes, where relevant, consideration of relevant legislation, such as Part 1 of the Climate Change Act 2008, which deals with the targets for 2050, Section 56 of the Climate Change Act 2008, and Sections 1 to 3 of the Environment Act 2021, which deal with specific environmental targets. The framework document will also explicitly make it clear that the Crown Estate will include in its annual report a report of its activities in relation to sustainable development.”*

### **Other amendments we support**

We also support the Government amendment tabled by Lord Hunt and Earl Russell regarding community energy projects. It is useful to clarify that GB Energy may facilitate, encourage and participate in its objects including through projects that involve and may benefit local communities.

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Wildlife and Countryside Link (Link) is the largest nature coalition in England, bringing together 86 organisations to use their joint voice for the protection of the natural world and animals.

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