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Packaging chiefs have hit out at the government's carbon reduction plan for failing manufacturing at a time when unemployment levels have reached a 14-year high.

The government yesterday launched its 'Low Carbon Transition Plan' designed to cut carbon emissions, but British Glass and the Packaging Federation said energy prices could go up as a result, putting UK packaging at a competitive disadvantage.

British Glass director general David Workman told *Packaging News* it would be more difficult for the UK than other European countries to achieve renewable energy targets as it was starting from a lower point.

"The UK has a climate change agenda, but the economic crisis is not being taken into account. Politicians are ploughing ahead with their plans, but where's the finance coming from to meet the objectives?" he said.

Workman said the glass industry was disappointed there was not more emphasis on saving energy in buildings and that improving insulation had tremendous potential.

"The technology is there to cut carbon dioxide emissions, and manufacturing plants would provide employment. It's a win-win situation," he said.

Energy and climate change minister Ed Miliband said: "The plan benefits industry because I think we can be a leader in the new low carbon technologies of the future and we've announced funding to make that possible."

Packaging Federation chief executive Dick Searle said that the new plan was another problem for industry to face in a difficult economic environment.

"It seems to be a general view that recovery will have to be industry-led and not city-led. But all the burden for carbon seems to be falling on business. What about consumers?" he said.

201,000 more people were unemployed in the three months to May than the previous period, increasing the total by 0.9% to 2.38 million. At 7.6%, the unemployment rate is at its highest since 1995.

The Office for National Statistics said 2.68m people were employed in manufacturing in the quarter, the lowest figure since comparable records began in 1978.

"Unemployment is about the health of the economy and how quickly business is going to recover. The government needs to address fundamental issues we face like energy costs," said Searle.

To download the UK Low Carbon Transition Plan [click here](#).

**UK LOW CARBON TRANSITION PLAN**

- 10% cut in annual emissions in the workplace by 2020
- By 2050 emissions should reach zero
- £120m funding for offshore wind
- £60m funding for wave and tidal energy
- £4m expansion to manufacturing advisory service to support carbon reduction
- Campaign to help SMEs shift to low carbon



Workman: "UK will find it hard to hit energy targets"

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