



Stop Climate Chaos Scotland

Briefing for Parliamentary debate: Taking Scotland Forward -
Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform

Wednesday 1st June 2016

About Stop Climate Chaos Scotland

Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS) is a diverse coalition of organisations in Scotland campaigning together on climate change. Our members include environment, faith and international development organisations, trade and student unions and community groups.

SCCS works to ensure Scotland plays its fair part in tackling climate change and that the commitments set out in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 are achieved, including targets to reduce emissions by 42% by 2020 and 80% by 2050.

Introduction

The Paris Agreement at the end of 2015 marked a pivotal moment in the global response to climate change. The Agreement set a target of keeping *'global average temperature to well below 2°C...and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C'*.

In light of the Paris Agreement, Scotland must begin to make real inroads to reduce our emissions, in line with our Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. Transformational policy changes will enable Scotland to continue to stand on the world stage as a climate leader, and bring additional benefits to people in Scotland. For example, energy efficiency can create warmer homes and reduce fuel poverty and investment in active travel would provide safer healthier travel options.

In 2009, the people of Scotland spoke when they demanded, in their tens of thousands, that the Scottish Parliament agree a Climate Change Act. Every party in the Parliament united to deliver the world-leading legislation. Since then, four missed annual emissions targets have not sent the right message to the international community about the positive case for reducing emissions.

With a new Parliament and newly-formed Government, the time is right to step up climate action in Scotland and to focus on a number of key areas. The top priority for the new Scottish Government on climate change must be to deliver more action to reduce emissions across the economy, particularly in the areas highlighted further below.

The next climate change action plan (RPP3), which the Scottish Government has said will be published by the end of this calendar year¹, must contain sufficiently ambitious policies to provide confidence that our country is on track to deliver year on year emissions reductions in line with our climate commitments. A new Climate Change Act, if brought forward will also offer an opportunity to emphasise the importance of climate action and introduce new policies. SCCS recommends action is particularly required in the following areas:

Energy efficiency of Scotland's buildings

¹ Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, letter to RACCE Committee convenor, 26th November 2015, <http://bit.ly/1TMRz7V>

² *No one in Scotland living in a hard-to-heat draughty home by 2025*, Existing Homes Alliance, December 2015,

Last year, the Scottish Government committed to establishing improvement in energy efficiency of Scotland's buildings as a National Infrastructure Project. It is essential that this is taken forward now and given the status and attention it needs and deserves. The significant funding required to make this happen must be reflected in this autumn's Spending Review and be supported by the implementation of minimum energy performance standards for all private homes.

The Scottish Government should also set a target of supporting all homes to reach at least a 'C' Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) standard by 2025. As well as being the minimum level of ambition required to allow long-term climate targets to be met, this level is supported by over 50 civil society and business organisations².

It would bring the obvious benefits of people living in warmer homes, improving the housing stock overall and reducing energy consumption and therefore emissions. It would also create thousands of new jobs in insulation, boiler installation and the delivery of other efficiency measures.

Low carbon transport

Transport policies must be a priority for all MSPs and for the Scottish Government in this Parliament. Transport is the sector which has seen by far the least progress in terms of policy effort and actual emissions reductions. The sector accounts for a quarter of Scottish emissions and is the only sector which has not reduced its emissions during the past 20 years. The current climate change action plan for Scotland (RPP2) does not contain a single Scotland-level policy to reduce emissions from transport.

Investment in cycling and walking is essential, alongside a move away from a socially unjust focus on improving travel for private car drivers. Current public spending on transport is focused on enhancing use of the private car, which disproportionately benefits high earners and men³. At the same time, emissions from air travel need to reduce, not increase and we seek measures to secure that, including no cut to Air Passenger Duty (APD).

Farming and food

What we eat, how it's produced and how we dispose of food waste, all have an influence on emissions in Scotland. Agriculture and related land use accounts for 23.4% of Scotland's emissions⁴, so improving how the countryside is managed is key to meeting Scotland's targets. However, this is a sector that the Scottish Government's independent climate advisor, the UK Climate Change Committee, has identified as needing more action if we are to meet our climate obligations⁵.

We can reduce emissions from farming and food by delivering policies which promote healthy food choices, change food procurement policy, cut food waste, promote organic

² *No one in Scotland living in a hard-to-heat draughty home by 2025*, Existing Homes Alliance, December 2015, http://existinghomesalliancescotland.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/EXHAS_jointstatement_Oct15.pdf

³ *Warning Signs*, Transform Scotland, September 2012, <http://transformscotland.org.uk/what-we-do/research/warning-signs>

⁴ *Scottish greenhouse gas emissions 2013*, Scottish Government, published June 2015, <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/06/1939/314105>

⁵ *Reducing emissions in Scotland: progress report 2015*, UK CCC, published March 2015, <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Scotland-report-v6-WEB.pdf>

farming, and secure regulations to get all farmers to reduce fertiliser use. A Good Food Nation Bill and a new Climate Change Bill should be used to help to address these issues.

Renewable energy

SCCS want to see at least half of all of Scotland's energy (across electricity, heat and transport) being generated from renewable sources by 2030. To achieve this, transformational policies need to be introduced to rapidly accelerate the use of renewables in heat and transport.

At the same time as the renewable energy sector should be supported to flourish, the inevitable move away from fossil fuels, including North Sea and other fossil fuel exploration, must begin in earnest.

A Climate Justice approach

Unless we reduce greenhouse gas emissions, climate change will continue to undermine the fight against poverty and hunger. While the predicted direct effects of global warming in Scotland include increased likelihood of flooding and more frequent storms and heavy rain⁶, the impacts in other parts of the world will be far more profound.

For many of the world's poorest people, from Malawi to Bangladesh, Ethiopia to Haiti, the impacts of climate change can mean the difference between life and death. For people living in what are already some of the most inhospitable climates in the world, increasing temperatures and unpredictable weather patterns – because of global warming – mean the difference between being able to grow crops successfully, to reliably access water, to protect homes from flooding.

Climate change is already having a severe impact on those least able to adapt to those changes and particularly to cope with extreme weather events. At the same time, those people who are most affected by this have done least to cause it. Historical responsibility for causing climate change lies with western countries, including Scotland. Our high-carbon lifestyles have created increasing levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, which are causing global temperatures to rise.

Scottish Government funds climate adaptation work overseas through the Climate Justice Fund (CJF), established in 2012. Through this fund, two rounds of £3m have thus far been made available for adaptation projects in developing countries. We believe the CJF should be increased during this Parliament to match the Scotland's International Development Fund – currently £9m per year - and ensure that the funding available is stable and predictable.

With ambitious climate legislation and Climate Justice Fund, Scotland could lead by example if we deliver on our climate commitments. We call on Scotland's leaders to deliver on its climate promises and to continue to make the case on international platforms for stronger action to cut emissions and increased climate finance for developing countries affected by climate impacts.

For more information, contact Gail Wilson, Stop Climate Chaos Scotland Campaigns Manager, gail@stopclimatechaosscotland.org or 0131 243 2701.

⁶ How well is Scotland adapting to climate change? ClimateXChange <http://www.climateexchange.org.uk/adapting-to-climate-change/indicators-and-trends>