



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee

Gillian Martin MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Climate Action and Energy
Scottish Government

19 January 2026

Dear Gillian,

Climate Change Committee evidence on the draft Climate Change Plan

We are now well into the second half of the 120-day scrutiny period for the draft Climate Change Plan. As you know, the Climate Change Committee has always had an important role in the Scottish Parliament's on-the-record scrutiny of the draft CCP, as the independent expert advisers to governments and parliaments whose word is respected and carries great weight.

Now, though, the CCC have advised that they wish to recuse from giving oral evidence to the Scottish Parliament before the Committee must report to the Parliament. This is because they will not publish their Scotland progress report, under section 9 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act until after our own report has been agreed. (I should make clear that the Committee understands this to be the position via official-level discussion: the Committee has not heard directly from the CCC Chair or Chief Executive since the draft was laid.)

It appears that this is because the CCC are interpreting on a highly precautionary basis the legal requirement under subsection (1)(d) of section 9 for them to set out in their progress report their "views on any draft climate change plan laid before the Scottish Parliament within the period of 12 months immediately preceding the making of the request". The view seems to be that this provision could be a barrier to them expressing views on the draft before the next progress report is published.

That specific requirement under section 9(1)(d) was inserted into the 2009 Act by the Climate Change (Emissions Reductions Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019. We were both Parliamentarians when the Bill for the 2019 Act was passing through the Scottish Parliament and we both took an active interest in the Bill. I expect you will be as surprised as I am to discover that a provision inserted for the entirely sensible purpose of requiring the CCC to comment in their annual progress report on a draft CCP published in the last 12 months is being interpreted in this restrictive way: so as to *actually frustrate* the CCC in its core role of advising and giving evidence on how to ensure governments deliver strong, effective plans and policies on climate change. I do not see how anyone benefits from this interpretation.

Contact: Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee, The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP. Email netzero.committee@parliament.scot We welcome calls through Relay UK and in BSL through Contact Scotland BSL.

Officials now advise me that the CCC's position is that they might be willing to provide written evidence earlier than the end of February but this would require to be agreed with the Scottish Government by virtue of the latter's formal role, under section 9 of the 2009 Act, in requesting annual progress reports from the CCC. However, even this limited proposal now appears to be stuck in a stalemate, with no firm offer yet being made.

I know that we have spoken on this matter before: at an earlier stage in the 120-day period when the issue of the CCC's proposed recusal from evidence-taking had just come to my attention and I was hopeful a common-sense resolution could be achieved. You indicated that you too were surprised by the position the CCC seemed to be taking, said you hoped that they might move on it, and confirmed you and your officials would be happy to offer what assistance you could.

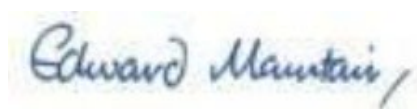
With time now running out, the Committee seeks your assurance that you will use your good offices and your role as effective "sponsor" of the Scotland progress report under section 9: to help clear the way for the CCC to provide on-the-record evidence on the draft CCP in time for the NZET Committee's report in its role as lead Committee, and to help achieve what is surely the common goal of the Scottish Government, Scottish Parliament and the CCC: a robust, effective, deliverable Climate Change Plan that will help take Scotland to net zero.

Any such written or oral evidence from the CCC would need to be provided by around the first 10 days of February.

In view of the urgency of this matter, the Committee would be grateful for a response by 23 January.

I am copying this letter to the Chief Executive of the Climate Change Committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Edward Mountain".

Edward Mountain MSP
Convener