

**Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee**

**Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill**

**SUBMISSION FROM Sustrans Scotland**

**Introduction**

Sustrans Scotland is the charity that's enabling people to travel by foot or by bike for more of the journeys we make every day.

This submission does not comment on the ambition or extent of emissions reduction targets. This submission is in response to the Committee's request for views on what actions and behaviour change will be required if Scotland is to meet climate change targets.

Electric vehicles are too often seen as the single solution to transport's major contribution to carbon emissions. It is the view of Sustrans Scotland that there is a level of ambition and expectation attached to the uptake of electric vehicles that is not shared with walking and cycling despite the potential for "comparable impacts" on carbon reduction. <sup>i</sup>

**Walking and Cycling necessary to achieving carbon targets**

In order to achieve proposed carbon reduction targets, Scotland will need to rely more heavily on the potential carbon reduction offered by switching journeys from motorised vehicles to walking and cycling. Recent research indicates that policies centred on electric vehicle promotion alone will not be sufficient for Scotland to meet emission reduction targets for the transport sector. <sup>ii</sup>

In addition to current policies to promote electric vehicle uptake, significant lifestyle change will be needed that includes increases in walking and cycling, public transport use, and policies to restrict private car access to urban centres and reduce the need to travel. <sup>iii</sup>

The potential of active travel to contribute to carbon reduction is frequently underrepresented in climate policy. A study conducted by the European Cyclists' Federation found that if EU countries were able to replicate Danish levels of cycling, this would 'achieve 12 to 26% of the [EU] 2050 target reduction set for the transport sector, depending on which transport mode the bicycle replaces'. <sup>iv</sup>

Sustrans Scotland's response to the consultation on the Climate Change Bill in September 2017 outlined how a 10% cycle mode share would lead to a 55,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e reduction in emissions, equivalent to a quarter of the proposed reduction in carbon emissions for transport between 2019 and 2020. <sup>v</sup>

A greater proportion of journeys being made by active travel means less need for vehicles and, over time, vehicles numbers can be reduced. This would make a transition of vehicle

fleets to electric easier to achieve as there are fewer vehicles to replace. Additionally, there is lower demand for energy if there is lower motorised vehicle usage. Combining increases in both active travel and electric vehicles leads to modelled transport sector emissions 43% lower than expected under the current proposals, with no extraordinary assumptions about uptake of active travel.<sup>vi</sup>

### **Walking and Cycling for earlier carbon reduction**

Climate change demands cuts in carbon as quickly as possible. Compared to the time taken to decarbonise transport emissions from vehicles, increasing active travel can yield reductions in carbon emissions more quickly.

The Scottish Government projects it will take until at least 2030 to phase-out half of fossil-fuelled vehicles from urban environments.<sup>vii</sup> Even then the electricity used to charge them will not be carbon neutral. Though the target is for half of Scotland's heat, transport and electricity needs from renewable sources by 2030, only a 28% reduction in carbon emissions from the electricity generation is expected by 2032.<sup>viii,ix</sup>

A 12% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030 is a reasonable expectation for active travel; an amount only matched by transition to electric vehicles by around 2050.<sup>x</sup> This has an added benefit of the potential to cut yearly emissions sooner, multiplying the impact.

### **Conclusion**

The greatest carbon reduction is achieved by pursuing both increases in walking and cycling and increases in the proportion of vehicles that are electric. This response has outlined evidence that increases in active travel will be necessary to achieve ambitious targets, and the potential of active travel for reducing carbon emissions sooner.

The Scottish government deserves credit for the commitment to phase out fossil fuel vehicles and for doubling the active travel budget to £80 million per year.<sup>xi</sup> This funding should be maintained and increases considered, especially to help local authorities with match-funding requirements.

Scotland also has strong complimentary active travel policies, and policy to support transport targets should include promotion of measures which support uptake of active travel, including default 20mph speed limits on all residential or restricted roads and reducing the access of private cars to urban centres.

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- <sup>i</sup> Brand, Anable & Morton (2018) Lifestyle, efficient and limits: modelling transport energy and emissions using a socio-technical approach.
- <sup>ii</sup> Ibid
- <sup>iii</sup> Ibid
- <sup>iv</sup> European Cyclists' Federation (2011): Cycle More Often 2 Cool Down the Planet. Available: [https://ecf.com/files/wp-content/uploads/ECF\\_BROCHURE\\_EN\\_planche.pdf](https://ecf.com/files/wp-content/uploads/ECF_BROCHURE_EN_planche.pdf)
- <sup>v</sup> Sustrans Scotland (2017). Sustrans Scotland's response to the consultation on the Climate Change Bill. Available: [https://consult.gov.scot/energy-and-climate-change-directorate/climate-change-bill/consultation/download\\_public\\_attachment?sqld=pasted-question-1467894590.05-55511-1467894590.71-30316&uuld=281259311](https://consult.gov.scot/energy-and-climate-change-directorate/climate-change-bill/consultation/download_public_attachment?sqld=pasted-question-1467894590.05-55511-1467894590.71-30316&uuld=281259311)
- <sup>vi</sup> Brand, Anable & Morton (2018) Lifestyle, efficient and limits: modelling transport energy and emissions using a socio-technical approach.
- <sup>vii</sup> Scottish Government (2016). Switched on Scotland: A roadmap to widespread adoption of plug in vehicles. Available: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/20291/j457836.pdf>
- <sup>viii</sup> Scottish Government (2017). Scottish Energy Strategy: The future of energy in Scotland. Available: <https://www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00513466.pdf>
- <sup>ix</sup> Scottish Government (2018). Climate Change Plan The Third Report on Proposals and Policies 2018-2032. Available: <https://www.gov.scot/Resource/0053/00532096.pdf>
- <sup>x</sup> Brand, Anable & Morton (2018) Lifestyle, efficient and limits: modelling transport energy and emissions using a socio-technical approach.
- <sup>xi</sup> Scottish Government (2017): A Nation With Ambition: The Government's Programme for Scotland 2017-18. Available: <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/09/8468>