

Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee

Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill

SUBMISSION FROM Keep Scotland Beautiful

Introduction

Keep Scotland Beautiful is the charity that campaigns, acts and educates on a range of local, national and global issues to change behaviour and improve the quality of people's lives and the places they care for.

We are committed to making Scotland clean, green and sustainable.

We work with organisations, schools, communities and individuals to help reduce carbon emissions, improve the quality of local environments and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

We have welcomed the opportunities for engagement throughout the development of the Climate Change Bill, submitting a response to the initial consultation in September 2017 and engaging positively with the Bill when it was published in May. We welcome the opportunity to continue this engagement by responding to the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee call for evidence on the Bill.

Response

Keep Scotland Beautiful is supportive of the ambition and direction of travel set out in the Bill. It represents a positive step forward for Scotland which will help provide a long-term vision to guide detailed climate change policymaking over the coming decades. We recognise taking forward the vision for a low-carbon society is a shared endeavour between the Scottish Government, the public, private, third sectors and communities across Scotland.

The scope of the Bill

While we broadly welcome the ambition and direction of travel of the Bill, there are two areas that we would welcome commitment on; an extending out of Public Bodies Climate Change Duties (PBCCD) reporting and compulsory measures for the agriculture sector. We call for the implementation of compulsory measures such as soil testing, carbon audits and a nitrogen budget to ensure a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from the agriculture sector.

We would welcome a widening out of PBCCD reporting to more public sector bodies beyond the current 180 Major Player organisations to reflect the call for strong public sector leadership in the Climate Change Plan. We would welcome a commitment to a version of these duties also being extended to organisations that fulfil public services such as Housing Associations and Arms Length External Organisations (ALEOs).

Increasing targets and provisions to set a Net Zero Emissions target in the future

We welcome the increase of the 2050 target to 90% and believe that the Bill sets out provision for some of the toughest legislation in the world to tackle climate change.

We welcome the legal requirement for Ministers to review the net-zero target every five years, and that this will become legally-binding as soon as there is evidence to demonstrate the date is credible, achievable and has been consented by the Scottish Parliament. In addition, we support the commitment to cut emissions from all sectors in Scotland and not through the use of carbon offsetting.

We believe that this Bill provides us all with an opportunity to push for more ambitious and detailed new policies that will deliver multiple benefits for the economy, public health and our environment. The Bill will also allow us to firmly commit to a pathway that leads to zero emissions in the future.

Climate Change Plans

We call for a clear timeline and process for the publication of the next Climate Change Plan as soon as possible to allow all sectors to be clear on the action required. We would welcome clear alignment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals across future Climate Change Plans and related policy.

What actions and behaviour change will be required

In order to achieve the ambitious targets set out by the Climate Change Bill, action will need to increase immediately across every sector of Scotland. We're supportive of the Stop Climate Chaos Scotland call for MSPs from all parties to push for stronger targets on emissions and the action needed to deliver on them in line with the Paris Agreement. It is important to recognise that the journey to become a low carbon country requires action by

individuals, communities, businesses and government - not just the setting of ambitious targets.

The role played by community groups and individuals in driving change should not be underestimated. While acknowledging the essential role of strong policies and frameworks, we call for a greater emphasis to be put on empowering people to take action on local, national and global issues. We are ideally placed to engage with people on the ground to change behaviour and improve the quality of people's lives and the places they care for. Continued support for community organisations through the Climate Challenge Fund and young people through Eco-Schools Scotland are vitally important to ensure these ambitious targets, along with support from a range of stakeholders for behaviour change campaigns.

We support the Stop Climate Chaos Scotland ask in their initial response to Climate Change Bill Consultation in 2017 for the establishment of a Just Transition Commission to be put on a statutory basis in the Climate Change Bill. Further to this, we support the call from The Just Transition Partnership for the Commission to advise Government on making the transition to a prosperous low-carbon economy in which the costs and rewards are shared fairly; and report on the measures put in place to ensure that livelihoods of workers and of communities are protected and social equity is enhanced.