

Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee

Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill

SUBMISSION FROM Energy Agency

The Energy Agency, a registered charity, was established in 1999. It mainly operates in the four local authority areas of South Ayrshire, East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire and Dumfries & Galloway. The organisation has become highly specialised in managing insulation projects, education work in schools and consultancy work, working closely with local authorities, the NHS and universities, householders and community groups to deliver and evaluate projects to install energy efficiency and renewable energy measures across Scotland. The Energy Agency also operates the Home Energy Scotland advice centre in South West Scotland under contract to Energy Saving Trust.

The Energy Agency is a partner in Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS), a diverse civil society coalition of over 40 members campaigning for action on climate change.

SCCS has agreed a submission to this call for evidence and we are keen to register our endorsement of this in every aspect. The coalition believes that the Scottish Government should take bold action to tackle climate change here at home and play its part in supporting climate justice around the world.

The carefully-researched SCCS submission highlights a number of gaps in the current CCC advice on which the targets in the Bill are based. **We believe the Bill can and must go further than the proposed 90% reduction by 2050 and the net-zero in future proposal.**

We recommend that the Bill enshrines in law the following targets:

- Net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 at the latest
- Emissions reduction of 77% (on 1990 levels) by 2030

Beyond strongly endorsing the SCCS submission we would like to make the following points.

In respect of cumulative benefits obtainable from more ambitious interim targets:

The Energy Agency and NHS Ayrshire & Arran recently jointly released the following statement:

“Evidence exists that current domestic energy-efficiency policy interventions indicate improved health of participants. Work by the Energy Agency in a joint study with NHS Ayrshire & Arran suggest that an analysis of routine data correlates with reductions in hospital admissions for respiratory-related conditions in the postcode areas where wall insulation to increase levels of warmth took place. Comparisons were made examining hospital admissions for respiratory and cardio conditions compared with control groups who had not received insulation upgrades to their homes.

Self-reported mental health data was also collected from participants; anecdotal reports suggest improved mood of participants. The Evaluation Study indicates there is evidence of changes in proximal outcomes (e.g. improved housing conditions, increased indoor warmth/comfort, increased pride in the home and reduced fuel bills) which have known links to longer term health impacts. This supports the theory that insulation retrofits can provide the initial steps in health improvement pathways.

This work began in 2014 and is an ongoing detailed study with close links to Strathclyde and Glasgow University. Detail is being further developed combined with increasing statistical analysis by NHS Ayrshire and Arran.

The study indicates that there are statistically significant improvements when aggregated physical health and aggregated mental health scores are correlated with perceived warmth improvements. A link to the full study and the health outcomes can be found [here](#).”

The implications of this evidence are that bringing forward the rate of improvement in the energy efficiency of Scotland’s homes and in particular of those in fuel poverty, concentrated in the older segments of the population and in our more deprived and remote areas, will create a ‘multiplier effect’ in terms of emission (and cost) reductions both in domestic heating and in many areas of health service provision.

This phenomenon adds weight to the other strong benefits of ambitious interim reduction targets as detailed by SCCS and contributes towards Scotland’s wider objectives of a fair, just and egalitarian society, as delayed cuts compound the difficulties and costs associated with total cumulative emissions, for both Scotland and the international community.

In respect of targets based on expected technological advance:

In its advice to the Scottish Government the UKCCC specifically links targeting to what it considers to be technologically realistic, which is of course eminently arguable given the time period in question and the phenomenon of evolutionary inflation (as expounded by Earth scientist James Lovelock in *“A Rough Road to the Future”*(2015)).

We believe that to base a 30 year target on the expected progress of known technology is to deliberately aim low. The technologies required to help us achieve our targets will undoubtedly arrive sooner and exceed current expectations, as Scotland’s renewable energy generation industry has demonstrated, meaning that we can do better and sooner than current evidence would suggest.

For this reason and in the light of the more detailed evidence obtained by SCCS from the CCC relating to its conservative assumptions, we believe that a net-zero outcome by 2050 is perfectly achievable and to aim for 90% is not only unrealistic but leaves open the opportunity for any self-declared ‘hard to treat’ sector of the economy to claim special status and a rightful place in the unmitigated 10%.

SUBMISSION ENDS