

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

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

#### **SUBMISSION FROM Scottish Communities Climate Action Network**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our views on the new Climate Change Bill.

Last year the Scottish Government funded Scottish Communities Climate Action Network to run a series of workshops around Scotland to encourage public participation in their consultation on proposals for this new bill. A summary report from these workshops is available here:

<http://www.scottishcommunitiescan.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/2CC-Bill-Community-Consultation-Report-low-res.pdf> and the executive summary is

included below. The views expressed by the 124 individuals that participated in those workshops have helped to inform this short submission.

- Our view is that the Bill's approach to setting emissions reduction targets approaches the issue from the wrong end. Scotland's ambition should not be restricted by what the Committee on Climate Change advise as currently technically feasible. Climate science and climate justice require Scotland to set a target of net-zero GHG emissions well before 2050. There is a very limited global carbon budget remaining available to give us any reasonable chance of achieving the Paris Agreement ambition of limiting global temperature rise to less than 2°C. above pre-industrial levels, let alone 1.5°C. The need to stay within the global carbon budget must be the driver for setting targets -not what is thought to be more politically palatable in the short term or apparently technically easier to achieve. We should also consider that our early industrialisation and very long legacy of emissions in Scotland mean that we now have a particular moral responsibility to reduce our emissions to net-zero as quickly as possible.
- Likewise, to have a chance of keeping within the global temperature rise limit ambitions of the Paris Agreement, global emissions must reach a peak and start reducing as soon as possible. It is therefore essential that the interim targets in the Bill reflect this need for rapid, and early, emissions reductions
- Getting to net-zero will require transformational change, particularly of our economy. No-one knows quite what form this transformation will take but it will clearly need change at all levels. Communities of place have a particularly important role to play here as, at their small scale, they have the potential to

rapidly innovate, prototype and refine solutions to meeting local needs in ways that are appropriate for their local situation in a zero-carbon future. Such initiatives can then act as inspiration for other communities to quickly replicate or adapt for their own context -so enabling rapid and widespread transformation. But, this will require communities to be suitably empowered and resourced. It is therefore essential that the community empowerment agenda connects with the climate action agenda to remove structural barriers and unleash community-led action that develops the 'transformational resilience' necessary for communities to not only cope with likely short-term challenges but to proactively engage with creating and shaping Scotland's zero-carbon future. Development of truly local, and well facilitated, local democratic structures and processes along with drastic reform of land ownership and land-use planning and measures to address inflated land prices will all be essential.

- There is an opportunity for the new Bill to provide a new vision for Scotland -of a just and equitable decarbonised Scotland focussed on wellbeing for all. There is an urgent need for a new political narrative which reframes discussion of emission reductions, away from the current negative narrative of loss (and a focus on what we will need to give up), to one focussed on the exciting (albeit brief window of) opportunity that we have at this moment in human history to rethink the purpose of our economy and to empower people to fulfil their natural desire to build the thriving, caring, resilient communities that are central to our individual wellbeing. A summary of the vision for Scotland that our members are working towards is available here: [SCCAN vision](#). Clarity of purpose and avoidance of mixed messages on the part of Scottish Government will be essential.

**'We Need More Ambition'** -Report on Community Consultations on the proposed Climate Change Bill (October 2017)

### **Executive Summary: Community Responses to planned Climate Change Bill**

This report shares responses from the 124 people who participated in six community workshops held across Scotland – with summative reflections from those facilitating the consultations.

The youngest participant was 21 and the oldest 82 with a slight weighting to older years and slightly more female than male participants. A breakdown and postcode analysis is at Annex A.

These events were held during August and September 2017 on Mull, in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Melrose and Findhorn. The purpose was to support

people to respond to the Scottish Government's invitation to comment on proposals for a new Climate Change (Scotland) Bill to amend the Act which had been unanimously passed with all-party support in 2009.

### ***Key Reflections***

All the workshops generated animated conversations and it was clear that participants greatly appreciated the opportunity to discuss climate change and greenhouse gas emission reductions in a structured session. There was clear interest in graphic information about global warming across the globe and the visualisations of climate change trends and carbon budgets that were presented, with many expressing that such information should be more widely available and discussion of climate change needs to be normalised.

Whilst some participants took a pessimistic view of the feasibility of rapid emission reductions and were concerned about setting targets that might be challenging to meet, the great majority were anxious for the Scottish Government to provide bold and ambitious leadership with an unequivocal push for rapid change. There was a desire to ensure a collaborative approach with climate action central to all Government policies, full involvement of local government and a mass public engagement and awareness raising campaign alongside putting in place the physical and policy infrastructure and support to empower and unleash community action.

There was a general feeling among participants that the narrow focus on targets, and technicalities of how they should be set, meant that an opportunity for wider engagement and discussion about the implications of decarbonising our economy was not fully embraced by the consultation. There was further an expressed need for Government to also take into account consumption emissions, instead of only focussing on production emissions, when setting targets. This was particularly shown in the appetite for the development of zero-carbon place plans – as a way of involving people in sharing their local knowledge and ideas in a process of thinking through the challenges and opportunities of fully decarbonising their communities.

### ***Conclusions and Recommendations***

- Strong political leadership is needed with bold and ambitious emission reduction targets, demonstrating resolve to “walk the talk” and put measures in place for targets to be met
- Development of a positive vision for post-carbon Scotland is an opportunity to reflect on our priorities and values as a society

- Coordinated, cross-departmental Government action is essential
- There is a great demand for more community engagement and participation in all stages of the planning and practicalities of emission reductions
- Greater awareness of climate change is needed and discussion of the opportunities and challenges of decarbonisation should be normalised
- Physical and policy infrastructure and support is essential to empower community action
- Local democratic renewal is an opportunity to embrace zero-carbon local place plans
- Vulnerable sectors and communities must be supported to ensure a Just Transition for all
- The Bill provides an opportunity for relocalised economies and livelihoods with a transition to regenerative agriculture, housing refurbishment and support for sustainable active travel.