

# The Big Ask Scotland

An introduction to Friends of the Earth Scotland's  
campaign for an effective Scottish Climate Change Bill



Friends of  
the Earth  
Scotland

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## 1. Introduction

The Scottish Government hopes to introduce a draft Climate Change Bill to Parliament before the end of 2008, which will set a mandatory target to cut greenhouse gas emissions in Scotland by 80% by 2050. This is an opportunity for Scotland to lead the way in climate legislation. The Big Ask Scotland is Friends of the Earth Scotland's campaign for an effective Climate Change Bill which includes all sources of all greenhouse gases; places a fair and scientifically based limit on total emissions between now and 2050; and provides strong incentives and sanctions. This briefing introduces the key proposals in our campaign.

## 2. What the 80% target does not cover

The consultation paper published in April this year makes it clear that the Government does not intend the targets set by the Climate Change Bill to include emissions from international aviation and shipping.<sup>2</sup> Instead, it is argued that if a method for apportioning emissions from these sources is agreed internationally, it will then consider incorporating them into Scotland's reduction targets. Given the rapid growth rates of emissions from international aviation<sup>3</sup> and the sheer scale of emissions from international shipping<sup>4</sup>, this omission undermines the credibility of the entire framework.

It is clear that **the Bill cannot be effective unless emissions from international aviation and shipping are included from the start**. It is not necessary to wait until international agreement on apportioning emissions is reached. States are currently required to report these as a 'memo item' under the terms of the Kyoto Protocol, and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) publishes internationally accepted guidelines on how to do so<sup>5</sup>.

The viability of including all greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the Climate Change Bill targets is questioned in the Government consultation on the grounds of credibility and cost to the economy.<sup>6</sup> However, 16 per cent of Scotland's total GHG emissions would not be covered by targets if the Bill only includes carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>).<sup>7</sup> Including all GHGs would mean that emissions cuts could be prioritised according to the lowest marginal cost across gases as well as across industries or sectors, allowing a more cost-effective approach. Non-CO<sub>2</sub> greenhouse gases have a global warming potential (GWP) of between 21 and 23,900 times that of CO<sub>2</sub>, so even though the quantities emitted are smaller, their impacts are so serious that they must not be ignored<sup>8</sup>. **All greenhouse gases, including methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) and nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), measured as CO<sub>2</sub>eq<sup>9</sup> must be covered by targets in line with the international regime set by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.**

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### 3. A cumulative target

The 80% reduction target proposed by Scottish Ministers does not determine the total amount of emissions between now and 2050. The Government has indicated that it will not set an overall cumulative target and that it will drop its manifesto commitment to statutory annual 3% reduction targets, on the grounds that it will be more expensive to cut emissions early on in the target period<sup>10</sup>. This approach is dangerous: even if the future does bring technological advances which significantly reduce our emissions, by then we may already have emitted more than our fair share. **Unless the 80% target is backed by a cumulative target with statutory annual cuts and reporting, it could prove largely symbolic.**

The Bill must include a scientifically based limit on total emissions between now and 2050, which keeps within a fair share of the level of global greenhouse gas emissions required to restrict temperature rise to no more than 2°C. Annual cuts and reporting linked to the cumulative total are essential to ensure that Ministers are held to account for meeting targets.

### 4. Incentives and sanctions

Civic society is encouraged to make cuts with support from the new Climate Challenge Fund, and much of the business sector is obliged to make cuts under the European Emissions Trading Schemes and the Carbon Reduction Commitment. However, the Government has given no indication of what, if any, measures will be implemented by the Scottish Climate Change Bill to ensure that public bodies meet targets, or to penalise those bodies that fail to reduce their own emissions or emissions in sectors for which they have responsibility. Coupled with the lack of annual targets, **a Bill that does not provide for tough sanctions and incentives for public bodies could lead to toothless legislation.**

A Climate Super-Fund should be established that public bodies could bid into for support to help cut emissions in their allocated sector. **All Scottish emissions should be allocated to the relevant Government department or public body, and those bodies that fail to meet targets for cutting those emissions should be fined, with revenue raised going into the Super-Fund.** A proportion of the Super-Fund should be used to supplement International Development expenditure, to compensate the international community for the damage done by any failure to meet targets.

### 5. Conclusion

A Scottish Climate Change Bill that includes all sources of all greenhouse gases; places a fair and scientifically based limit on total emissions between now and 2050; and provides strong incentives and sanctions will enable us to achieve the Scottish share of emissions reductions, provide strong and accountable leadership and set a standard for legislation internationally.

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1 Scottish Government web (July 2008) <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/Climate-Change/16327/Climate-Change-Bill/Proposals-Timescales>

2 Scottish Government Consultation on proposals for a Scottish Climate Change Bill Jan 2008, 5.52 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/01/28100005/0>

3 The Tyndall Centre for Climate Change has predicted that unless government policy changes, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from UK aviation will have more than doubled by 2030 and trebled by 2050. See Bows, A. (2006). Produced in Cairns, S. and Newson, C. (2006). Predict and decide: Aviation, climate change and UK policy. Environmental Change Institute. University of Oxford.

4 According to a UN report leaked to the Guardian newspaper, international shipping accounts for 4.5% of global GHG emissions.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2008/feb/13/climatechange.pollution>

5 See IPCC Guidelines for International Greenhouse Gas Inventories <http://www.ipcc-nggip.iges.or.jp/public/gl/invs1.html>

6 Scottish Government Consultation on proposals for a Scottish Climate Change Bill Jan 2008 5.25

7 Scottish Executive Changing Our Ways: Scotland's Climate Change Programme March 2006, Annex F <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/03/30091039/0>

8 See Defra on Greenhouse Gas global warming potentials <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/research/carboncost/step1.htm>

9 CO<sub>2</sub>eq = carbon dioxide equivalent

10 Scottish Government Consultation on proposals for a Scottish Climate Change Bill Jan 2008, 6.14