



Big Ask - Big Success

How Scotland's Climate Change Bill can make a difference in Copenhagen

Summer 2009

The Scottish Climate Change Bill

The Scottish Climate Change Bill is one of the first pieces of national climate change legislation to be passed in the world. Following Friends of the Earth Scotland's Big Ask campaign and the efforts of fellow colleagues in the Stop Climate Chaos Scotland coalition, it is also the most progressive climate change legislation in the world in a number of key areas.

1. Early action to reduce emissions

The target for 2020 has been raised to 42% on the face of the Bill (albeit with some caveats that mean we will have to fight to ensure the target is not weakened later). This target is not only the highest emissions reduction target proposed or legislated by any developed country, it is also in line with the minimum reduction suggested by the latest science. In addition, when setting annual targets, Ministers must 'have regard' to what is 'a fair and safe cumulative emissions budget' - between now and 2050 - to prevent dangerous climate change.

2. Inclusion of international aviation and shipping

The Bill includes all the sources of all the main greenhouse gases - rather than simply CO₂. In particular, following our lobbying efforts, it will include international aviation and shipping from the outset. And ministers must take advice on the 'appropriate multiplier' for the enhanced effects of emissions at altitude.

3. Effective incentives and sanctions

There is now a strong duty on all public bodies (local authorities, government agencies and public bodies) to contribute to the delivery of climate change targets in line with national targets. In addition there are a number of enforceable measures to improve energy efficiency and reduce waste which will help drive down emissions. Finally, and importantly, there is a new duty on Ministers to undertake and publish carbon assessments of the Scottish budget, potentially laying the foundations for a future Climate Fund.

4. Limiting access to overseas carbon credits

The Bill is also the first in the world to limit the level of overseas credits the Government can purchase to meet its targets - limiting Government access to credits to 20%. Unfortunately however - by just one vote - the Government inserted an amendment to exclude emissions covered under the EU's Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) from this limit. We will need to monitor this area closely, and probably campaign for the limit to be tightened in the future.

5. Other successes

Alongside colleagues in the Stop Climate Chaos Scotland coalition, we also ensured that the Bill contains the reporting of emissions associated with the consumption of goods from outside Scotland; a sustainability duty; tougher provisions for adaptation; improved parliamentary scrutiny; useful waste reduction measures including the retention of powers to establish a plastic bag levy; and a legal requirement on Ministers to report on the emissions performance of power generation.

Towards Copenhagen

Taken together, these measures make the Bill genuinely world-leading and provide a much needed example in the run up to the Copenhagen Summit in December. We hope it also provides inspiration for national Friends of the Earth's Big Ask campaigns across Europe.

For further information contact:

Francis Stuart, Parliamentary Officer, fstuart@foe-scotland.org.uk, +44 131 243 2701