

Just Transition Partnership Joint Evidence on the Draft Climate Change Plan (RPP3)

Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee
Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee
Local Government and Communities Committee
Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee

10 February 2017

This evidence is submitted jointly by Friends of the Earth Scotland; Scottish Trade Union Congress; Communication Workers Union Scotland; Public and Commercial Services Union Scotland; Unite Scotland; UNISON Scotland; University and College Union Scotland; WWF Scotland.

We welcome the opportunity to input into the development of the third Report on Proposals and Policies, the Climate Change Plan, for 2017-2032, the blueprint for delivery of emissions reductions across the economy in this critical timeframe for climate action.

We note that some amongst us have submitted evidence separately to Committees. The purpose of this joint input is to draw attention to our shared concern that plans to tackle climate change have been too slow and not ambitious enough, and to press the Scottish Government and Parliament to ensure the Climate Plan delivers bold measures that will deliver a Just Transition to a modern low-carbon economy in ways which protect workers' livelihoods here in Scotland. Our Joint Statement on Just Transition, launched at our conference in December 2016 is attached as Annex 1.

The key points we wish to feed into the Committee's consideration of the Climate Plan are:

1. The Climate Change Plan should be used as the foundation of an industrial plan which should marshal the public and private investment needed for the transition.
2. A Just Transition Commission that includes union, community and environmental representatives should be set up to oversee and take forwards the transformation to a low-carbon economy.
3. Plans for the development of specific sectors and investment programmes should be driven forward by the government and its enterprise agencies, with the creation of taskforces for selected priority areas, which should include union/workforce representation.
4. These plans should build in the principles that:
 - livelihoods will be maintained; and training and re-training will be funded
 - measures to tackle disadvantage in the labour market will be included
5. Where necessary to secure change at sufficient pace and scale, options for public and community ownership or partial stakes in flagship projects and enterprises should be pursued.
6. Employment and social benefits for Scotland, and in particular for communities most affected by industrial change, should be secured through creation of local supply chains, community benefit clauses and local ownership.
7. Skills planning should anticipate of industrial transformation.
8. Participation of employees, their unions and communities is essential in the preparation of plans for the transition. This includes recognition of the roles of workplace environmental reps.
9. Support and enthusiasm of civic society for the transition should be encouraged and capacity for engagement should be resourced by the government.
10. Availability of access to funding sources for environmentally sustainable projects including retaining the Green Investment Bank in public ownership.
11. Public procurement should be used to foster a just transition through purchasing goods and services from enterprises that are low carbon and sustainable, and offer local social benefits and good workforce practice.



JOINT STATEMENT ON JUST TRANSITION

It's time for a Just Transition in Scotland, moving to a modern low-carbon economy in ways which protect workers' livelihoods, create a new industrial base and deliver a fairer Scotland. The need for action is urgent in order to avert the environmental and economic costs of climate change and to rebalance the economy to one which provides enough decent jobs making things in clean ways.

We share a concern that plans for this transition so far have not been ambitious enough and that progress has been slow except regarding on-shore wind. There has been little planning to ensure the protection of the people most affected, in particular those who work in sectors reliant on fossil fuels. It is necessary to confront the danger of losing a large part of the industrial base as employment in traditional sectors declines. Workers, if losing their job in these sectors, should be able to redeploy to new sectors and opportunities for retraining must be expanded.

As a new Scottish Energy Strategy and Climate Change Plan are being drafted we hope to see a pipeline of ambitious investment projects and the capacity to finance them put in place. Scotland has the opportunity to create an example which other nations might follow. However fine words and targets are not sufficient on their own and experience to date shows that the growth of renewable energy generation does not necessarily result in the creation of new manufacturing and engineering capacity and employment in Scotland. Specific measures are needed to ensure that these benefits accrue.

The government should take a decisive lead with plans to transform key sectors, for example electricity generation, energy storage, transport infrastructure, energy efficiency and sustainable heating for homes and businesses. Where necessary to secure change at sufficient pace and scale, options for public and community ownership or partial stakes in flagship projects and enterprises should be pursued.

Employment and social benefits for Scotland, and in particular for communities most affected by industrial change, should be secured through creation of local supply chains, community benefit clauses and local ownership. Social justice and equity have to be built in, with no-one left behind in this transition to economic and environmental sustainability.

We aim to create a shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities, invite others to join our commitment to promoting a just transition and help assemble the powers, finance and enthusiasm to ensure it happens in Scotland.

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