



Stop Climate Chaos Scotland

Stage One Debate Briefing for the Climate Change (Scotland) Bill

01 May 2009

Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS) is a diverse, growing coalition of organisations campaigning on climate change. The Coalition has 40 Scottish members, representing more than 2 million supporters, ranging from environment and development groups to faith organisations, trade unions, student societies, women's organisations, business groups, care providers and many more. For full details visit www.stopclimatechaos.org/scotland

This briefing sets out our twelve priorities for strengthening the Climate Change (Scotland) Bill. We strongly believe the Bill must include:

1) Strong targets for 2050 and 2020.

The top campaign priority for SCCS at its inception was a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from Scotland of at least 80% by 2050. We are delighted that this provision is the very first line of the Bill as introduced, and on this point the Scottish Government should be congratulated.

The Bill as introduced sets an interim target of 50% cuts from the 1990 baseline by 2030. The Government now agrees with SCCS that the interim target ought to be for 2020, and has pledged that it will be "more ambitious" than in the current draft Bill. The SNP's manifesto pledge of 3% minimum reductions per year would give at least a 43% reduction by 2020; the UK Government has said it will respond to a Copenhagen deal by setting a target of 42% by 2020. SCCS believes that, given that Scotland's greater renewable potential means it should be able to outperform the UK average. *You may wish to ask the Minister whether the Government will set a genuinely world-leading, yet attainable, target of 50% by 2020.*

2) Strong annual targets of 3%.

If Scotland is to make the reductions in greenhouse gases that we urgently require, we must take early and effective action. Annual targets of 3% year-on-year reductions must be set and met from the outset. As currently drafted the Bill provides for such targets from 2020 but, as the TICC Committee has recognised, there is a significant weakness in provision of targets for the coming decade. The science is clear: what matters most is what happens now, not in decades to come if we are to avoid the worst effects of climate change. We have produced a briefing showing that it is entirely possible to meet 3% annual targets from next year, which is available on request. *You may wish to ask the Minister whether, given the mounting scientific evidence showing the urgent need for action and the documents produced by SCCS showing that such targets are achievable, he will honour the SNP's manifesto commitment of 3% annual targets from next year.*

3) International aviation and shipping emissions.

SCCS welcomes the Scottish Government's stated intention to include the Scottish share of emissions of greenhouse gases from international aviation and shipping (IAS). However, as drafted, the Bill does not explicitly include these emissions on the face of the Bill. Given the rapid growth in the aviation sector any omission of these sectors would undermine the credibility of the entire framework.

We welcome the Committee's recommendation that IAS should be included in the Bill. Given the additional damage to the atmosphere that occurs when emissions take place at high altitude we also welcome the Committee's recommendation that the Government considers how this 'multiplier effect' can be incorporated into the data. *You may wish to ask the Minister whether the Government commit to*

including the Scottish share of international aviation and shipping emissions from the very start, and will these incorporate the multiplier effect for aviation emissions.

4) A Scottish advisory body to support delivery of the Bill.

The Bill gives responsibility for advising Ministers and reporting on their progress to the UK Committee on Climate Change, but gives Ministers power to transfer these roles to a Scottish committee if and when they choose. The Minister indicated in Stage 1 evidence that the Scottish Government did not foresee using this power. SCCS believes that in order to ensure high-quality advice and assessment on Scottish climate change risks and plans, we need a dedicated Scottish advisory body. Because part of the body's role is to give honest assessment of Ministers' progress, SCCS believes that members of this body should be appointed not by those Ministers, but the Scottish Parliament. *You may wish to ask whether the Minister will ensure that a Scottish advisory body should be created by the primary legislation, not left as an option for Ministers to use or ignore.*

5) Measures to ensure that at least 80% of the effort to cut emissions takes place in Scotland.

There are currently no measures in the Bill to ensure its targets are achieved through reducing emissions in Scotland. In effect, any targets in the Bill could be met from the purchase of carbon credits i.e. reductions made elsewhere in the world. There must be a measure on the face of the Bill to ensure that at least 80% (rising to 100% over time) of any targets will be met from emission reductions across the whole Scottish economy. This would not only demonstrate international leadership by ensuring that Scotland takes its fair share of the global effort required to avoid climate chaos but also commit Scotland to early investment in low carbon technology, making it a leading green economy and putting it at a competitive advantage globally. *You may wish to ask the Minister how the Bill will ensure that targets are met through reduction in emissions in Scotland rather than buying carbon credits from overseas.*

6) A duty on all public bodies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

As drafted, the Bill only creates enabling powers for Ministers to impose a climate change duty on public bodies in the future if they see fit. This need never be implemented and does not take account of the urgent need for early action. The public sector has a major role in leading by example. While some local authorities and other public bodies are doing good work, existing guidance and voluntary measures are not enough.

A statutory climate change duty would underpin the commitments of the Scottish Climate Change Declaration, which all councils have sign up to. This is a voluntary agreement to incorporate greenhouse gas emission reduction and climate change adaptation measures into new and existing strategies, plans and programmes, in line with sustainable development principles, and to report annually. *You may wish to ask the Minister whether he will agree to the Committee's recommendation that a general climate change duty should be established now.*

7) Robust, transparent reporting measures.

SCCS welcome the Committee's recommendation that cumulative emissions should form part of the reporting regime. To complement this, we believe that cumulative emissions should also form part of the criteria when setting targets.

We also believe it is important that the Scottish Parliament has the opportunity to properly consider and debate progress toward climate targets and the policies used to meet them. We propose two measures to promote Parliament's involvement in the process. Firstly, that Ministers accompany their annual climate change reports with a written offer to meet with any committee that wishes to discuss them. Secondly, the submission of reports should begin a 60-day period for parliamentary consideration, the results of which Ministers must give regard to, just as is done for the submission of the National Planning Framework currently. *We would welcome contributions to the debate that support these proposals.*

8) Strong enforcement measures to ensure delivery.

We welcome the Committee's recommendation that a robust and effective carbon assessment mechanism is crucial to develop policy; that Ministers should set out action plans to deliver emissions reductions in key sectors; and that the Government produce a strategy overview document.

SCCS believe that to ensure effective delivery, we need additional enforcement measures in statute. SCCS believe that:

- With minimal adjustment to ensure reporting on climate impacts, Scotland's world-leading Strategic Environmental Assessment legislation could be made compatible with the Climate Bill. Parliament could then 'call in' plans, programmes and policies that put at risk Scotland's targets and ensure the Minister(s) responsible justified approval.
- Adjustments to Scottish law should be made to ensure the Bill is compliant with the Aarhus Convention. This would allow public interest groups to seek a court ruling if ministers were failing to comply with their duties under the Bill.
- In addition, and linked to carbon assessment of the Budget, a public sector carbon budgeting regime, backed with effective incentives and disincentives, could encourage delivery.

We would welcome contributions to the debate that support these proposals. In particular, you may wish to ask the Minister whether he has considered strengthening SEA legislation to fully take account of climate impacts and thereby make it compatible with this Bill.

9) Counting and reporting on those emissions from our consumption as well as production.

Quite rightly, all of the targets introduced by this Bill refer to the greenhouse gases emitted in Scotland. But Scots also impact upon the climate by the consumption choices they make; by buying goods produced or processed overseas we require other countries to emit climate-changing gases on our behalf. SCCS believes that it is important that we have access to information on that - the Bill should therefore create a duty on Ministers to report on Scotland's consumption-based emissions. Having this extra information will lead to better policy decisions; for example, it helps protect against offshoring Scottish jobs by revealing the continuing emissions even if a factory has been closed down, the work moved overseas and the products imported rather than produced in this country. *You may wish to ask the Minister how the Government intends to include reporting of emissions from consumption.*

10) A sustainable development duty.

SCCS has argued for an over-arching sustainability duty in the Bill, and believe the inclusion of a commitment to a sustainable approach in the long title would show international leadership. It would ensure our approach to tackling climate change provides for social and environmental justice, at home and abroad. *You may wish to ask the Minister what progress has been made on including a sustainable development duty in the Bill.*

11) Annual reporting on adaptation.

SCCS welcomes the Committee's conclusions in relation to adaptation. We are keen to see a commitment to a more detailed assessment of the risks for Scotland of the impacts of climate change, as well as annual reporting on progress towards adaptation actions. The Government in its consultation on an adaptation strategy has committed to providing annual progress reports, making that commitment statutory would demonstrate that Scotland is serious about managing the risks of a changing climate, for communities, businesses and the environment. *You may wish to ask the Minister if he agrees that adaptation is important enough to warrant a Scottish risk assessment and statutory annual reporting.*

12) Strong energy efficiency measures.

SCCS welcomes the emphasis on energy efficiency and demand management in the TICC Committee's report, and particularly welcomes the Committee's call for the Scottish Government to quantify the emissions reduction to be achieved through energy efficiency.

Stop Climate Chaos Scotland agrees with the Committee, and believes the best way to do this would be to set targets in the energy efficiency action plan, against which progress should be reported on regularly. *You may wish to ask the Minister what level of emissions reduction the Government believes is possible through energy efficiency by 2020 and 2050, and whether the Government will include targets in the energy efficiency action plan.*

For further information or briefing material, please contact:

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Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS) is a growing coalition of organisations campaigning on climate change. SCCS brings together environment, faith and development organisations, trade unions, community activists, and women's and students' groups.

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