

April 2017

Open letter from climate scientists regarding Scotland's Climate Change Bill

Dear Sir

The 2015 Paris Climate Change Agreement set a long-term goal of limiting global average temperature increase to well below 2°C, and committed governments to pursue efforts to limit this to 1.5°C. As scientists and researchers working on climate change and how to address it, we are all too familiar with the impacts that climate change will have, and is already having, on people and ecosystems around the world. And as climate science has evolved, it has become ever clearer that exceeding the 1.5°C goal will lead to large negative impacts.

We welcome the Scottish Government's commitment to bring forward more ambitious climate targets in a new Climate Change Bill this year in response to the Paris Agreement. Meeting the Paris goals requires urgent, transformational global action to rapidly reduce emissions to achieve 'net zero' emissions globally by the second half of the century – a balance between emissions and removals of greenhouse gases. In the interests of equity, richer nations like Scotland clearly need to achieve this goal much sooner than developing nations.

With the forthcoming Climate Change Bill, the Scottish Government has an opportunity to demonstrate international leadership and responsibility if it declares its intention to achieve net zero emissions for Scotland by 2050 at the latest. This would be an important signal ahead of the forthcoming IPCC report on 1.5°C in the autumn and the next UN climate conference, where pressure is on all nations to increase their ambition in line with the Paris goals.

List of Signatories

- Professor Pete Smith, Professor of Soils & Global Change, University of Aberdeen
- Professor Gabi Hegerl, Professor of Climate System Science, University of Edinburgh
- Professor John Rowan, Vice-Principal (Research, Knowledge Exchange and Wider Impact), University of Dundee
- Professor Myles Allen, Professor of Geosystem Science, Environmental Change Institute, University of Oxford
- Professor Julian Allwood, Professor of Engineering and the Environment, University of Cambridge
- Professor David Beerling, Sorby Professor of Natural Sciences & Director of the Leverhulme Centre for Climate Change Mitigation, University of Sheffield
- Professor Pierre Friedlingstein, Chair of Mathematical Modelling of Climate Systems, University of Exeter
- Professor Michael Grubb, Professor of Energy and Climate Change, University College London
- Dr James E. Hansen, Director of the Program on Climate Science, Awareness and Solutions, Earth Institute, Columbia University
- Dr Joanna House, Reader in Environmental Science and Policy, University of Bristol
- Dr Emily Shuckburgh, Fellow of Darwin College and Fellow of the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership, University of Cambridge
- Dr Julia K. Steinberger, Associate Professor in Ecological Economics, University of Leeds