



Stop Climate Chaos Scotland

Evidence to the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee on implementation of RPP2
September 2014

Introduction

Stop Climate Chaos Scotland welcomes this opportunity to provide evidence to the Committee on the Second Report on Proposals and Policies (RPP2). We also welcome the Committee's continued scrutiny of this important report to ensure the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 is implemented.

The importance of the RPP2 and its ongoing scrutiny cannot be overstated, since it is the only blueprint Scotland has for how our climate targets will be achieved.

Summary of recommendations

1. Bring forward proposals to help address gap due to missed targets
2. Greater effort on renewable heat and transport as indicated necessary by the UK Committee on Climate Change (UKCCC)
3. Greater funding on energy efficiency as requested by UKCCC
4. Address assumptions in RPP2 which are unlikely to occur e.g. EU 2020 target
5. Amend RPP2 to account for change in emissions inventory so it remains relevant

Global context

Global greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise and are now 61% higher than they were in 1990 (the baseline year)¹. At the same time, global temperatures are increasing² and climate impacts are being felt across the world.

Earlier this month, world leaders met at the UN Climate Summit in New York to discuss the road forward for tackling climate change. Renewed political ambition is required if global temperatures are to stabilise and be brought under control. To coincide with this summit, hundreds of thousands of people across the world across the world took part in 'People's Marches' to voice their concern about climate change. As part of this global day of action, over 2,000 people marched in Edinburgh on 21st September 2014, demonstrating considerable public concern in Scotland about climate change.

Scottish context

Scotland has committed to strong action on climate change and that commitment, across the Scottish political spectrum and all sectors of society, has been widely commended. Earlier this month, Stop Climate Chaos Scotland launched a new video, *Scotland's Climate Action Story*³, to inform policymakers in other countries about that ambition. The Scottish Government has also undertaken work to promote the Scottish climate example to other countries⁴.

¹ www.wmo.int/pages/mediacentre/news/index_en.html#globalcarbonbudget

² www.wmo.int/pages/mediacentre/news/RecordheatinAugustJune-August.html

³ www.stopclimatechaos.org/campaigns/scotlands-climate-action-story

⁴ <http://bit.ly/ZetCht>

Therefore it is imperative that Scotland's climate commitments are delivered, including meeting all annual emissions targets set under the Scottish Climate Change Act. With the Scottish climate example being highlighted to other countries as one that should be followed by others, we cannot afford to fail.

As the Committee will be aware, Scotland has missed all annual emissions targets so far. While this may in part be attributed to improved carbon accounting, had more policy effort taken place in the five years since the Act was passed, the likelihood of this happening would have significantly reduced. It is also important to note that the emissions targets in the early years were very small reductions and future targets will be increasingly challenging to meet.

We also note that carbon accounting will continue to evolve and it is essential that this does not prevent us from hitting future emissions targets. Changes to the emissions inventory are a positive improvement, as it gives a more accurate picture of emissions levels across the time period.

Stop Climate Chaos Scotland welcomed the additional policies announced by the Scottish Government in June 2014. These are good first step to addressing the most recent missed target, but considerably more effort to translate proposals to policies will be needed to get us back on track to meet all future targets.

Importance of RPP2

It is essential that RPP2 – as the only blueprint for how Scotland will achieve its climate targets - remains useful and relevant. Parliamentary Committees, the Climate Change Delivery Board and the new Cabinet Sub-Committee on Climate Change, as well as civil society, must be able to monitor progress and take timely action to ensure all future targets are achieved.

As could be expected a year after the report was published, aspects of RPP2 are already dated e.g. the assumption that the EU will increase its 2020 climate target to a 30% reduction. It is now increasingly clear that this will not happen and this has a significant impact on Scotland meeting its own targets. The EU is currently debating a 2030 emissions target, which will be agreed this autumn in Brussels⁵.

As the Committee highlighted in its report on the draft RPP2 in 2013:

'It is clear from the draft Second Report on Proposals and Policies (RPP2) that there is only one combination of circumstances that will allow Scotland to meet each of its annual targets from 2013 until 2027. This requires implementation of all the proposals and policies in the draft RPP2, together with a shift in the EU wide emissions reduction target from the current target of 20%, to a target of 30%, as was envisaged when the 2009 Act was passed...

The Committee is therefore concerned that further annual targets, as set out in the 2009 Act, will be missed and recommends the Scottish Government ensure all proposals and policies outlined in the draft RPP2 are implemented.'⁶

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/2030/index_en.htm

⁶ <http://bit.ly/1umAFkP>

The RPP2 should be updated to reflect current plans to meet legally-binding targets given that the EU policy shift will not now take place in the assumed timeframe. Every proposal and policy identified in the RPP2 must be implemented fully as the Committee recommended last year. The Scottish Government's Climate Change Delivery Board's Checkpoint Report identifies areas of potential abatement shortfall⁷.

In addition, to ensure the RPP2 remains relevant and useful, it should be updated to reflect the changing greenhouse gas inventory, as well as new policies announced to address the missed 2012 target.

To address previous missed targets and remain in line with Scotland's legislated cumulative budget, further additional policy effort must be put in place if future targets are to be met. The most straightforward way to do this would be to bring forward action to turn proposals in RPP2 into concrete policies at an earlier date.

Financing proposals and policies to reduce emissions

In order that the Committee and other relevant bodies can track and appropriately respond to developments in reducing emissions, there must be a clear and transparent read-across between what is set out in the RPP2 and in annual Scottish Government Budgets. Without this, it is difficult, if not impossible, to say with any certainty whether proposals and policies are 'on track'.

As the Committee highlighted in its Budget and Spending Review scrutiny in 2011:

'the Scottish Government needs to improve the presentation of both its proposals and policies documents (the RPP), and its budget documents, to make clearer who is responsible for delivering which proposals and policies, and to enable a clearer read-across between the documents. Tracking Scottish Government spending on climate change policies needs to be made clearer and more transparent.'⁸

More needs to be done to fulfil the spirit of this recommendation, so there is a clear read across between RPP2 policies and budget lines.

The CCC has called for additional policy effort and more funding from the Scottish Government in energy efficiency to tackle both emissions and rising rates of fuel poverty. The CCC highlights renewable heat as an area requiring further effort: 'the current pipeline for renewable heat needs to be developed if the 2020 target is to be achieved'⁹.

The CCC has also identified emissions from transport as being of 'particular importance for the achievement of Scottish targets and highlights'¹⁰. Given that, as we highlighted when the draft was being scrutinized, the RPP2 does not contain a single Scottish policy on transport, it is essential that transport proposals are committed to and funded, at an earlier date than proposed, to address this particularly important sector.

⁷ <http://scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0045/00451990.pdf>

⁸ www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/45089.aspx

⁹ www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/1871_CCC_Scots_Report_bookmarked.pdf

¹⁰ *ibid*

Conclusion

There is still an opportunity to turn things around and meet future targets set under the Scottish Climate Change Act. It is essential that this happens, not only to deliver on the legislation, but also to reassure those watching the Scottish example from other countries that ambitious climate action is desirable and achievable.

This is a crucial time for climate action and Scotland could play a positive role in increasing global ambition. It is essential that all proposals and policies in the RPP2 are implemented at least to the agreed timetable. In addition, to address previous missed targets and remain in line with Scotland's legislated cumulative budget, additional effort must be put in place over and above what is set out in RPP2, if future targets are to be met.

For more information, please contact:

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Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS) is a coalition of organisations campaigning on climate change, including environment, faith and development organisations, trade and student unions and community groups.
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