

Stop Climate Chaos Scotland

Briefing for Scottish Climate Change Bill Stage One Debate

Tuesday 2nd April 2019



Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS) welcomes the ECCLR Committee's Stage One Report on the new Climate Change Bill, particularly noting the recommendations to strengthen the Bill to 'ensure that Scotland fully contributes to meeting the challenge of limiting temperature rises to 1.5°C as set out by the IPCC', including urgent action and setting a net zero target.

SCCS is a diverse coalition of international development and environment organisations, trade and students' unions, faith and community groups campaigning together for action on climate change.

Given the latest scientific evidence showing the need for urgent action, SCCS urges MSPs to **vote for the Bill at Stage One**, but advocate for amendments at later stages to introduce:

- A **focus on action in the next decade**, with a target of 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030
- A target of reaching **net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045** or earlier
- **New policy action** to cut emissions from transport, homes and agriculture.
- A requirement for better transparency and read-across between Scottish Budgets and Climate Change Plans.

Limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C

Global temperatures have already increased 1°C above pre-industrial levels, with damaging impacts being felt around the world. Climate change makes storms like Cyclone Idai, which devastated parts of Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe recently, much more likely.

The UN's climate scientists, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) [published a report](#) in October last year which made clear that all governments must act faster to limit global warming to no more than 1.5°C in order to avoid the most catastrophic climate impacts.

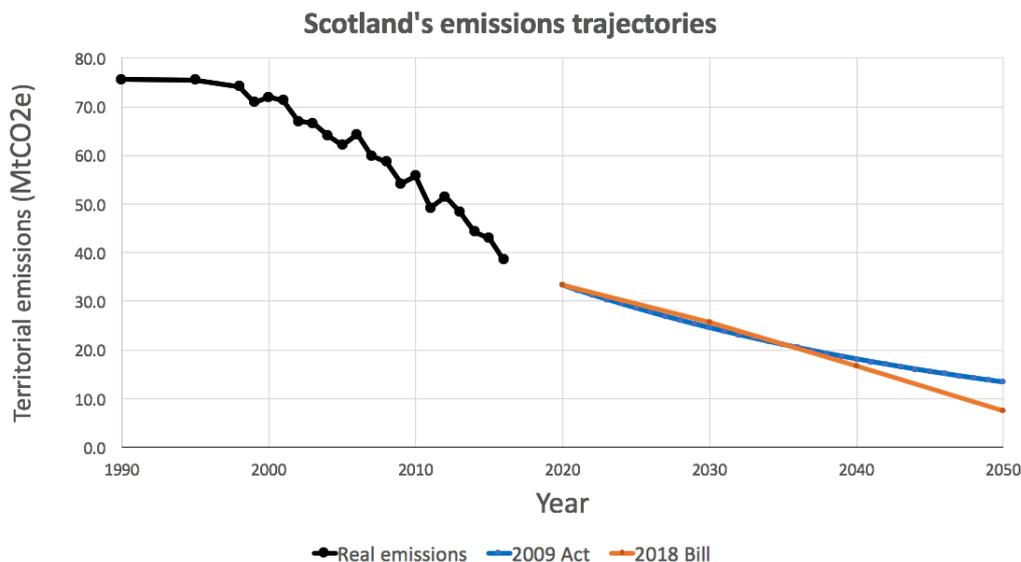
Focus effort on action in the next decade

The IPCC report states that without rapid, far-reaching change we could see global warming reach 1.5°C as early as 2030. They stress that the next decade is crucial, while scientists at Manchester University's Tyndall Centre [published research](#) last year, which states that at current levels 'Scotland will exceed its Paris 2°C commitment in under 10 years'. **Yet the current Climate Change Bill proposes no increase in action until after 2030.** The 2030 emissions reduction target proposed in the Bill to cut emissions by 66% (on 1990 levels) amounts to no more action than the Government committed to ten years ago in the 2009 Scottish Climate Change Act, as illustrated in *fig 1*.

SCCS welcomes the Stage One Report highlighting the IPCC's call for 'rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented' action, and the need to revisit the 2030 target proposed in the Bill. The report also highlights the benefits of action over inaction, and states that "the Scottish Government and other witnesses were certain that whatever the overall cost of mitigating and adapting to climate change, the cost of inaction and delayed action will be far greater."

To avoid the catastrophic impacts of breaching 1.5°C of global warming set out in the IPCC report, while recognising Scotland’s historic contribution to causing climate change and our capability, both financially and technologically, to do more to tackle it, **the Bill should set a target to reduce all greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% in 2030.**

Fig 1:



A net-zero greenhouse gas emissions target

SCCS believes the Bill must set a target for Scotland to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045 or earlier.

The Stage One Report rightly highlights that Scotland has a responsibility, as a developed nation with a history of contributing to climate change, to do more than other countries to achieve the global target of limiting warming to 1.5°C. This was backed up by Professor Jim Skea of the IPCC, when he stated in his evidence to the committee that to make a “reasonable and fair contribution” “a country such as Scotland should probably aim for something a little earlier” than the global bracket.

The Stage One Report concluded ‘a net-zero target for all greenhouse gases is necessary’, and would ‘send a strong signal, emphasising the need for change’. Since the Bill was tabled, new evidence has been released showing Scotland can reach **net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045.**

Expanding on existing Scottish Government and CCC analysis, [a recent report from Vivid Economics and WWF Scotland](#) set out multiple pathways for Scotland to achieve net zero. It shows that Scotland can hit net zero before 2045, with a sensible approach to rapidly increasing carbon sinks and deep cuts to emissions. These reductions are achievable while maintaining economic growth, and without reducing production of carbon intensive products. The report concludes that achieving this is feasible but will require a broad suite of supportive policy from Scottish Government.

Evidence given to the ECCLR committee was clear that achieving net zero greenhouse gases before the middle of the century is vital for Scotland to do its part in avoiding overshooting a 1.5°C rise in global temperature. October’s IPCC report set out the disastrous impacts of missing this, including 2 billion people exposed to extreme heat waves at least once every 20 years, an ice-free Arctic at least once every 10 years rather than once every 100 years, and virtually all coral reefs lost by 2100.

Scotland must deliver our climate justice promises

As a developed country whose industrialisation contributed significantly to global climate change, and given our ability to do more to reduce our emissions than many other countries, it's imperative that Scotland adopts stronger targets than the global average.

SCCS was encouraged by the Stage One report reflecting the importance of intergenerational justice, and calling for the Bill to be underpinned by this principle. Recently, we've seen children across Scotland, and the rest of the world, going on climate strikes demanding action on climate change.

SCCS encourages MSPs to respond to these calls by supporting moves to include climate justice principles on the face of the Bill to reflect the urgency that young people and those in the global south need to see in today's legislation.

The need for policies in the Bill

The Stage One report is right to highlight that the Bill should be amended to include policy measures, including "additional types of targets", to support emissions reductions. Stronger targets must be backed up with policies which will deliver reductions in emissions.

SCCS has supported the inclusion of a number of such targets; including a nitrogen balance sheet, to support a more circular agricultural economy, and a target on EPC ratings, to improve the energy efficiency of homes in Scotland. We particularly welcome the Committee's recommendation that further consideration is given to putting a Just Transition Commission into legislation. SCCS encourages MSPs to support additional policies in the Bill which help deliver stronger targets.

The impact of climate change

SCCS coalition members witness first-hand the impact of climate change. A decade of progress in fighting global hunger has been reversed in the last three years with climate change a leading cause of this rising again. Women are already vulnerable due to unequal societies, and climate change exacerbates this. For example, in Uganda women already walk 6 hours a day to fetch water - as dry seasons become longer, women are forced to walk further still for water and firewood.

People in poorer countries are five times more likely to be forced to move by "sudden-onset" weather disasters than people in richer countries. Persistent drought in the horn of Africa has led to devastating food and water shortages, affecting at least 16 million people. Super typhoon Mangkhut caused extensive damage across Asia in September - including in the Philippines where 200 mph winds triggered deadly landslides. Unusually widespread flooding across Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia damaged crops and properties displacing at least one million people in early 2018.

Bill timings and new scrutiny

SCCS would support moves to allow the Committee reasonable time to scrutinise the new advice currently being written by the UK Committee on Climate Change (UKCCC), expected on 2nd May. While the Stage One Report is right to encourage the Scottish Government to adopt the more ambitious targets in the advice, time should be given to reflect on Scotland's potential and our duty - because of our historic responsibility for emissions - when applying this advice to the targets.

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