



# Stop Climate Chaos Scotland

## Briefing on the Budget debate

20 December 2012

### Introduction

On 25 October 2012, Stop Climate Chaos Scotland facilitated a meeting between people from across Scotland with their MSPs, to send a clear message to Parliament and Government that there is strong public support for more action on climate change. Concerns were raised about the failure to hit the first target under Scotland's world-leading Climate Act, and the apparent lack of alignment of the Government's Budget with its climate ambition, particularly in homes and transport. We urge MSPs to reflect these concerns in the Budget debate.

### Summary

- SCCS is concerned that this Budget is at odds with Scotland's ambition to lead the world with its Climate Change Act. We support both the EET and the ICI Committees' concerns that the level of public investment in home energy efficiency and active travel are insufficient to meet ambitious Government objectives.
- We remind MSPs of the RACCE Committee's call last year for the Scottish Government to ensure that all proposals and policies in the Report on Proposals and Policies and any future revisions of the RPP, are 'fully funded' in order to meet Scotland's climate targets. The Scottish Government has not heeded this call, but has presented a Budget that does not fully fund all measures laid out in the current Report on Proposals and Policies.
- The success of Scotland's Climate Act depends on the Government delivering – and funding – policies to meet its targets. We call on MSPs to ask for reassurance that emissions reduction targets will be met if our Act is to remain a credible example of leading climate change legislation.

Scotland has committed to the most progressive climate change legislation anywhere in the world. Given that the first emissions reduction target under the Scottish Climate Change Act has now been missed by over a million tonnes, we must see considerably increased action to ensure that future targets can be met. This Budget provided a key opportunity to get us back on track.

A low carbon Budget is important not only to provide the benefits and opportunities within Scotland of moving to a low carbon economy but also to retain our international reputation on climate change and ensure we play our part in delivering climate justice, particularly for the world's poorest communities who are already affected by its impacts.

### Matching spending with Government plans to meet climate targets

In its Budget report last year, the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee urged the Government to ensure that 'all proposals and policies in the RPP [Report on Proposals and Policies] and any future revisions of the RPP, are fully funded, in order to meet the targets set out in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009'. Both EET and ICI committees this year have repeated their concerns about the ability of the Budget to deliver on the Government's plans to meet emissions reduction targets, particularly in homes and transport. SCCS calls on MSPs on these committees to stand by these concerns and call for increased funding levels for home energy efficiency and active travel.

SCCS is again concerned that many of the important recommendations outlined in the EET and ICI Committee reports are not reflected in the Finance Committee's final report. This is despite the fact that the Budget dedicates one of its 'fundamental priorities' to securing 'new opportunities through the low carbon economy'. SCCS believes the current budget fails to give sufficient priority to the environmental imperative of delivering the Scottish Climate Act and falls short of realising the economic opportunities presented by the move to a low carbon economy.

SCCS welcomes the Green Investment Package announced in the 2013-14 draft Budget, but does not believe that this funding is at a sufficient level to meet climate change targets, as set in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. We believe this Budget must provide at least £100m in public funding for the National Retrofit Programme, and a commitment to 10% of the transport budget allocated to active travel.

SCCS also welcomes the announcement of funding for peatland restoration and the subsequent confirmation of £1.7m over two years. However, this figure falls far short of our calls £12m per year over 10 years for this green investment which can halt carbon emissions, benefit Scotland's iconic wildlife, improve drinking water quality and provide employment in rural areas.

### Opportunities and benefits of low carbon investment

Moving towards a low carbon economy and funding measures to cut emissions will also bring multiple benefits right across the Scottish economy, including thousands of jobs and improved health. The Scottish Government has stated that there are "significant opportunities associated with the transition to a low carbon economy", including the potential for low carbon activity to grow to 10% of the Scottish economy by 2015 and provide 130,000 low carbon sector jobs by 2020. The CBI also recently confirmed that "Green or growth' is a false choice, highlighting that 'a third of the UK's economic growth in 2011-12 came from green business". While excellent progress has been made in Scotland to realise the potential of the renewables industry to reduce emissions and create green jobs, there is still much more that will need to be done in the home energy and transport sectors to ensure the maximum impact of these opportunities can be reaped in Scotland.

### Homes and transport budgets: key sectors to reduce emissions

The 2010 emissions data published earlier this year showed that emissions from the housing and transport sectors are higher now than in 1990. Transport and home energy efficiency programmes are two of the key areas where significantly more effort is required to meet our climate change targets. At the same time, there needs to be a move away from spending vast amounts of public funds on carbon-intensive activities.

There is evidence that investing in low carbon transport and energy efficiency/fuel poverty projects can bring benefits to small to medium businesses across Scotland. Because this work is required across the country, it is much more accessible to smaller, local businesses and local authorities than large road-building projects. For example, the development of National Cycle Network route 78 (Oban-Balachulish) was delivered by local companies. Small projects like these keep money in the local economy and ensure that capital investment and the resulting job creation is spread across Scotland.

SCCS urges MSPs to highlight the importance of a truly low carbon budget and call for added funding to make our transport and homes sectors truly low carbon. Scotland has committed to the most progressive climate change legislation anywhere in the world, and this Budget provides a key opportunity to get us to where we want to be.

For more information, please contact:

Gail Wilson, Stop Climate Chaos Scotland Co-ordinator, [gail@stopclimatechaosscotland.org](mailto:gail@stopclimatechaosscotland.org)  
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