

The Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee

Green recovery

Submission From **Stop Climate Chaos Scotland**

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What key policies, actions and immediate priorities are needed to deliver a green recovery (within your sector and / or community)?

Immediate Priorities

This is a cross-sector response as we believe that the government needs to transform many aspects of our society to get us on a pathway to achieve net-zero by 2045. In particular, we believe that the government needs to:

1. Transform our energy systems:

- Deliver 100% renewable electricity generation in Scotland for a fully decarbonized electricity system by 2032
 - Set mandatory requirements for siting renewables locally on local content and for community benefit
 - Extend the scope of the Publicly Owned Energy Company to take the necessary comprehensive role to drive renewable energy generation, foster opportunities for community energy and prioritise ending fuel poverty over shareholder profit
- Invest in our distribution grids to meet the needs of fast decarbonizing heat and transport
 - Focus resources on implementation of demand response, load switching and direct supply arrangements for electric heat and transport to stimulate local energy economies in grid constrained areas where dependency on fossil fuels, per capita carbon emissions and fuel poverty are particularly high

2. Make our buildings fit for the future:

- Accelerate improving energy efficiency to the existing building stock
 - Ensure that all homes in Scotland reach at least Energy Performance 'C' by 2030 supported by regulation to require renovation at point of sale or major refurbishment, for owner occupiers from 2024, and new minimum standards for the rented sectors
- Revise building standards so all new buildings meet the highest energy efficiency standards from 2021
- Phase out of gas boilers in new homes before 2024
- Increase investment for energy efficiency and expand work to support community-led retrofit initiatives
- Phase out high carbon heating like oil and LPG in off-gas areas by 2025 and set a date for the phase-out of replacement gas boilers in existing homes on the gas grid

- Ensure electric heating systems installed during energy efficiency work in new build homes are capable of providing flexibility services and compatible with doing so over open protocols to prevent one company from dominating the market

3. Transform our transport networks:

- Prioritise capital investment in low-carbon transport infrastructure that reduces private car use, with 10% of the transport budget dedicated to active travel.
- Support spending and policies that encourage local service delivery, support local businesses, and empower people to work from home, reducing the need for long-distance travel.
 - Ensure 100% broadband coverage to empower people to work from home
- Establish a city-wide zero emission zone in operation in every city by 2030
- Extend public transport networks, make them accessible and affordable in both urban and rural areas, and accelerate the electrification of buses.
- Extend the concessionary travel scheme.

4. Transition to a circular economy:

- Upgrade recycling infrastructure to increase capacity and capability
- Move to a full circular economy
 - Introduce a full ban on all items in the EU Single-Use Plastics Directive (SUP) priority list by 2021
- Install the infrastructure for an effective deposit return scheme by 2022
 - Introduce charges on single-use disposable beverage cups by December 2020
- Support behavior change that reduces food waste, such as that seen during the pandemic

5. Protect and enhance our land and seas:

- Increase investment in peatland restoration with the aim of restoring all of Scotland's degraded peatlands (current spending will not achieve that)
- End the commercial extraction and sale of peat for horticulture
- Ban rotational burning on peatlands
- Ensure incentives for tree planting do not undermine peatland restoration
- Establish a spatial management regime for inshore fisheries which ceases damage to all biogenic reefs, seagrasses, kelp and other habitats which sequester carbon and establish regeneration targets for each
- Increase funding and raise targets for native woodland creation, including:
 - Natural regeneration for native woodland alongside tree planting
 - Prioritise expanding and restoring native woodlands
 - Fund research and training for management of existing woodlands
 - Encourage the integration of farming with woodland, including agroforestry, which is the beneficial combination of agriculture and forestry
- Properly fund the development of Regional Land Use Partnerships and Frameworks to ensure a more strategic approach to land use choices and decision making and better targeted public funds.

6. Transform our food, farming and fishing systems:

Farming

- Transform Scottish agricultural policy and financial support so that it facilitates and rewards a shift to low carbon farming and the delivery of public goods like enhanced wildlife and flood mitigation.

Food

- Incorporate the human right to food into Scots Law. Part of the Right to Food's definition encapsulates access to good food for future generations. This means having a statutory requirement to have in place ways of growing food now that does not undermine future generations' ability to have sufficient good food.
- Establish an independent Scottish Food Commission to scrutinise relevant policies, report on the state of the food system against agreed indicators and oversee a democratic and rights-based approach to food.
- Require Scottish Ministers to consult on and collectively agree a plan for food, farming and fishing in Scotland every five years.
- Place duties on local authorities, health boards and other public bodies to adhere to the right to food framework and incorporate the priorities established in the National Food Plan into their strategic decision-making and service provision.
- Set targets for increasing organic production and consumption (including public procurement).

Fishing

- Urgently recover fish stocks to the point at which they can deliver maximum sustainable yield as low carbon sources of protein, this includes recovery by protecting the functioning of spawning grounds and juveniles from bycatch pressure.
- Ensure that all public subsidy (including access to quota, fuel subsidy etc.) supports only sustainable fishing practices and those that are transitioning to achieving sustainability.
- Invest in the development of climate friendly fishing of other low carbon sources of seafood, e.g. seaweed farming, bivalve aquaculture, integrated multi-trophic farming.
- Help fisheries and marine managers mitigate and minimise any impact on blue carbon stores, for example, by avoiding the disturbance of carbon rich sediments; restoring saltmarshes, seagrass meadows, shellfish reefs and kelp forests; and support sustainable and low impact industries including fishing, seaweed farming and bivalve aquaculture.

7. Embed and invest in climate justice at home and abroad:

- Engage with community led local initiatives through deliberative democratic processes that empower citizens and enable them to co-create with each community planning partnership local plans to tackle climate disruption.
- Champion climate justice and demonstrate global leadership by getting on track to achieve our climate targets, and by publishing our commitments to all forms of climate action in an indicative Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in advance of COP26
- Provide new and additional international climate finance by increasing the existing Climate Justice Fund, and champion for other nations to increase their own financial commitments.
- Identify and implement new, progressive and innovative sources of climate finance
- Champion the issue of Loss and Damage at COP26, in particular supporting the calls of the least developed nations to establish a financial mechanism to address this issue
- Ensure green recovery policies are underpinned by principle of policy coherence, aligned with SDG implementation at home and abroad, and urgently convene first meeting of interministerial group on PCSD

How should the 2021/22 Budget support a green and sustainable recovery and avoid locking in carbon; and what funding is needed in the ECCLR portfolio to deliver a green and sustainable recovery?

The seven areas outlined above require investment to deliver a green and sustainable recovery.

Alongside investment the government should use all the levers at its disposal to stimulate positive economic activity. The government could, for example, change rules in ways that stimulate changes in behaviour or private investment. Regulation alongside incentives can help drive the private sector contribution to creating a net zero economy, whilst minimising the burden on public spending and boosting long term productivity.

The combination of regulation with incentives or support can be particularly effective. On farming, for example, the approach taken by the government to reduce agricultural emissions— which has focused on providing information and encouraging voluntary changes in practice — has not worked. Changes in regulation are needed to drive changes in practice. The Government has a role in supporting farmers to change, perhaps through the provision of grants where there is a strong public interest or low interest loans where there is a greater private interest. The transformation programme will be particularly important in the short- medium term and a clear direction of travel for coherent policy reform would allow farmers to see where policy is heading and invest accordingly.

In addition to the importance of the combination of regulation and incentives, the government has an important role in setting the direction through a wider range of strategic policy documents and signals. The Climate Change Plan update could provide a strong signal to the industry and SCCS would like to see the government use that opportunity to affect change.

Policy coherence

For our recovery to be truly green and just, and in order to fulfil our commitments to the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Scotland must ensure there is coherence between its domestic policy and global sustainable development outcomes. Communities in the global south are facing the double threat of COVID-19 and climate change. The socio-economic impacts of the pandemic threaten to undo the progress made in the fight against poverty.

As Scotland develops priorities and policies for recovery and renewal, it must use every lever it has to ensure that it builds back better, not just for people here in Scotland but for the international community as well. In 2019 the Scottish Government committed to launching a new Inter-Ministerial Group on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD). It has yet to hold its inaugural meeting, but the broad, cross-portfolio implications of COVID-19 and climate change mean that such a group would be perfectly placed to ensure that people and climate are at the heart of Scotland's recovery.

Policy coherence can ensure better outcomes in the poorest countries and better sustainable development outcomes everywhere - including here in Scotland.

General response

Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS) is a diverse coalition of over 50 civil society organisations in Scotland campaigning together on climate change. Our members include environment, faith and belief groups, international development organisations, trade and student unions and community groups and we welcome the opportunity to provide a view on green recovery to the ECCLR Committee. We believe that climate action must be at the heart of any plan for economic recovery. This is a critical moment in which the government must choose to put us on a path to a low carbon future.

The Scottish Government is already required to act in a way that best mitigates climate change and we have welcomed progress to date in that regard. Throughout the pandemic, the Government and the people have understood the need to be honest, listen to scientists and act in accordance with

the best scientific advice. That same understanding must inform our economic return with a transition to a green economy that is fair to everyone here and around the world and can bring good jobs, better health, stronger communities and put us on a path away from climate catastrophe.

We believe that we should not simply invest in those sectors that have been negatively affected in order to mitigate the immediate damage and put ourselves on the old path; we should grasp the opportunity to invest in programmes, technologies and research that puts us on a new path. A path that both embeds some of the positive behaviour changes we have recently seen and drives new change.

Principles

The Committee has sought views on the principles set out by the CCC and embedded in the concept of sustainable development. SCCS has set out its own principles and there is substantial overlap. Our principles that we communicated to the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery are as follows:

- **Meeting Scotland's statutory emissions reduction targets must be central to a green, fair and sustainable economic recovery.** The measures taken as part of the economic return will have a significant impact on Scotland's efforts to deliver on its climate targets. Global climate science has been clear that a rapid reduction of emissions over the next decade is crucial in avoiding the worst impacts of the climate emergency. Action taken now must not lock in significant future emissions and should be targeted towards meeting our 2030 target to reduce emissions by 75% and the long term target to reach net zero by 2045.
- **Our economic recovery must work for both people and climate.** For too long economic growth has come at the expense of the environment, fuelling the climate crisis and damaging people's health and wellbeing. Action to recover should build resilience to systemic shocks, such as climate change, and look to deliver multiple social goods – improved public and environmental health, fair and just access to services and employment and community resilience.
- **Our economic recovery must work for both people and nature.** Action to recover must also address the nature crisis we face, with 11% of species at risk of extinction in Scotland. The biodiversity and climate crises are deeply connected, and addressing one requires addressing the other. Our recovery must enhance biodiversity and local food systems and avoid activities that degrade the environment. Economic recovery efforts should include the promotion of nature-based solutions such as woodland expansion, peatland restoration and flood management, all of which protect and restore nature while leading toward green jobs.
- **A Just Transition is central to a green, fair and sustainable economic recovery.** Many jobs and livelihoods in the oil and gas industry have been lost as a result of the pandemic while many more will be impacted by the transition to a low carbon economy. Our economic recovery should promote the growth of green industries, creating urgent new, quality opportunities for those who have lost their jobs and livelihoods during the pandemic as well as for those likely to be impacted during the transition to a low carbon economy. A just transition should be planned for those sectors that will be most affected and investment provided for new opportunities in climate friendly industries of the future. We urge caution with new technologies such as Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS)/ BioEnergy Carbon Capture and Storage (BECCS) when interpreting models for and pathways to net zero.
- **A green, fair and sustainable economic recovery should embed and build on recent positive behaviour change.** The Covid-19 crisis has seen radical behaviour change with home working and changes in travel patterns. There has been a marked increase in demand for local food, with support for local food producers and shops. This is an opportunity for the

Government to bring forward measures that enable us to keep and accelerate some of the changes in behaviour that will help improve health, increase resilience and reduce emissions. These changes need to be felt widely and fairly.

- **Our recovery is also international.** A global pandemic requires a global response to defeat it. Communities in the global south are already facing the double threat of COVID-19 and climate change. Scotland, as a historic fossil fuel producing nation, has a particular responsibility to reduce emissions and join other climate leaders in bringing about urgent global action. It is vital that any recovery package is part of a global just transition. It is essential that we rebuild our economies in a way that protects the most vulnerable, and ensures we fulfil our commitments to the Paris Agreement, Sustainable Development Goals and to those in the global south who are already paying a heavy price for our historic emissions. Scotland must use the UN climate talks in Glasgow to push for robust implementation of the Paris Agreement and for significantly increased financial support to help impacted countries adapt to ever-increasing climate impacts, pursue low-carbon development models, and deal with irreversible climate damage.