



Stop Climate Chaos Scotland

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Humza Yousaf MSP,
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Scottish Government
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(sent by email to firstminister@gov.scot)

Dear First Minister,

Congratulations on your election as leader of the SNP, and appointment as First Minister.

I am writing on behalf of Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS) to introduce you to the coalition and our work, and to identify forthcoming opportunities for climate action. SCCS formed in 2006 and is the largest civil society coalition in Scotland, with over 60 organisations campaigning together on climate change. Our members include environment, faith and international development organisations, trade and student unions, and community groups. We believe that the UK and Scottish Governments must take bold and faster action to tackle the climate crisis, delivering our fair share of action in response to the Paris Agreement and championing international climate justice, and financing this by making the biggest polluters pay for their damage. The urgency of this issue, and the need for decisive action in the next few years, was underlined very recently by the IPCC sixth assessment synthesis report,¹ which highlighted that the “level of greenhouse gas emission reductions this decade will largely determine whether warming can be limited to 1.5°C”.

Firstly, thank you for your positive response² to our call for a strong and public commitment on climate issues during the leadership campaign and for confirming in your acceptance speech that achieving Net Zero was a priority. We also welcome your comments in relation to a public equity stake in ScotWind, and your attention to tax reforms³, which we have argued should form part of our policy response to the climate crisis⁴.

In our letter to SNP leadership candidates⁵ we noted that Scotland is seen by many as a leader on climate issues, and we can be rightly proud of positive actions that have been taken by your predecessor's governments. However, while progress has been made to reduce Scotland's emissions, it is nowhere near fast enough: seven of the last 11 emission reduction targets have been missed, and the Scottish Government's independent climate advisers warn that the target framework is “in danger of becoming meaningless”⁶ without a clear pathway for delivery, and that Scotland has begun to lose its lead on climate over the rest of the UK.

This trajectory cannot continue: the targets were set on the advice of the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) to be necessary to meet the vital 1.5°C objective under the Paris agreement that limits the most dangerous levels of warming. With devastating extreme weather events becoming more frequent, fuelling increased poverty and hunger, Scotland must renew and deepen its global climate leadership by redoubling efforts to meet its targets.

Announcing your intention to hold a climate summit in Autumn of all relevant stakeholders, including SCCS, within your first 100 days as First Minister would send a clear statement of your intent to prioritise climate action. It would re-inject much needed energy into efforts to reduce emissions, implement a Just Transition and support international climate justice. Such timing would focus attention ahead of the new Climate Change Plan and in the run-up to COP28, and would be a welcome continuation of the collaborative approach you demonstrated in previous Ministerial roles.

As First Minister, you now have the opportunity to deliver solutions to reduce emissions at pace in ways that can also improve health, build more resilient energy and food systems, create sustainable

jobs, and result in a fairer and more equal society in Scotland and around the world. There are several important bills or policy initiatives underway which all have a significant bearing on our future progress, including land reform and net zero, sustainable development and well-being, and the circular economy, and some of the most significant are:

Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan

- This must adopt an unequivocal stance against any new oil and gas licences or projects in the North Sea - whether for exploration, or the development of known reserves.
- Moving away from fossil fuels is key to tackling both the cost-of-living and climate crises, and every devolved lever must be used to fairly accelerate the move towards clean and more reliable energy and employment⁷.
- It should also recognise the challenges of relying on negative emissions technologies, many of which cannot deliver to the scale and timeframes envisaged, as well as confirming that they should not be used as a means to prolong the use of fossil fuels in the energy sector.
- Recent polling shows that 70% of SNP voters support a move away from fossil fuels as “quickly as possible” by ramping up efforts to improve energy efficiency and developing more renewable energy⁸.

Climate Change Plan

- This must embed transformative new policies across all sectors to ensure Scotland’s 2030 and 2045 emission reduction targets are met, including to reduce car use, rapidly expand our native woodlands, speed up restoration of peatlands, and hugely increase investment in home energy efficiency.
- We agree with the previous First Minister, who recently said that this document will be “one of the most important to be published over the period ahead”⁹.

Agriculture Bill

- This represents the perfect opportunity to realign policy for a sector which is responsible for nearly a fifth of Scottish emissions, and to encourage climate and nature friendly farming. If agriculture and land-use fail to reach their respective targets, Scotland will fail to reach its national targets too.

International climate justice

- Scotland has shown international leadership by acknowledging the need for climate reparations and being the first nation to commit finance to help address climate change-induced Loss and Damage, championing the need to help communities recover from the devastating impacts of extreme climate impacts, such as recent flooding in Pakistan and cyclones in Malawi.
- The recent Scottish Government report¹⁰ on ways to address loss and damage will help the Transitional Committee of the UNFCCC develop its recommendations, and the Scottish Government should continue and enhance its leadership by maintaining existing funding and increasing it through new and additional sources of finance raised by making the biggest polluters pay most. We hope that you will be able to attend COP28, to share positive examples from Scotland to press the UK and other rich nations to go further and faster.

We hope you will lead a Scottish Government that will respond ambitiously to the UN Secretary-General’s “**clarion call to massively fast-track climate efforts by every country and every sector and on every timeframe**”¹¹, and we stand ready to work with you and your Ministers. We would very much welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the idea of a climate Summit and to hear more about how you plan to use the opportunities outlined above to deliver the transformational changes needed.

Yours sincerely,



Mike Robinson
Chair of Stop Climate Chaos Scotland

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- ¹ <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sixth-assessment-report-cycle/>
 - ² <https://www.stopclimatechaos.scot/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Reply-from-Humza-Yousaf-8th-March-2023.pdf>
 - ³ <https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/politics/humza-yousaf-back-wealth-tax-29553552>
 - ⁴ https://www.stopclimatechaos.scot/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/FinancingClimateJustice_Briefing_ONLINE.pdf
 - ⁵ <https://www.stopclimatechaos.scot/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/SCCS-and-LINK-letter-to-SNP-leadership-candidates-3rd-March-2023.pdf>
 - ⁶ <https://www.theccc.org.uk/2022/12/07/scotlands-climate-targets-are-in-danger-of-becoming-meaningless/>
 - ⁷ <https://www.stopclimatechaos.scot/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/SCCS-briefing-a-managed-wind-down-of-North-Sea-oil-and-gas-production-in-line-with-a-Just-Transition.pdf>
 - ⁸ <https://news.stv.tv/scotland/next-first-minister-must-prioritise-move-away-from-oil-and-gas-campaigners-say>
 - ⁹ <https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/search-what-was-said-in-parliament/meeting-of-parliament-23-02-2023?meeting=14159&iob=128257>
 - ¹⁰ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/practical-action-addressing-loss-damage/pages/1/>
 - ¹¹ ¹¹ <https://press.un.org/en/2023/sgsm21730.doc.htm>