



Stop Climate Chaos Scotland

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John Swinney MSP
First Minister
Scottish Government
St. Andrew's House
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(sent by email to firstminister@gov.scot)

Dear John,

Congratulations on your election as leader of the SNP, and appointment as First Minister. It is a critical time for many areas of policy, with climate very much being one of these, and your recent recognition that the climate emergency is “a real and present threat to our society” and commitment to “take climate action”, is welcome.

Today marks five years since the Scottish Parliament declared a climate emergency. In that time we have seen climate impacts worsening in Scotland, but most severely affecting people in the world's poorest countries who did least to contribute to it. Therefore, Scotland's prioritisation of this critical issue and delivering appropriate action in response is more imperative than ever.

As you are well aware, climate change and the policies related to delivering emissions reductions are very live issues at the moment, and the subject of considerable media and political debate. In Scotland, this has been centred around deliberations over the next Climate Change Plan, the recent Climate Change Committee report to the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Government's statement of 18 April 2024 made in response, including the intention to remove the 2030 interim target, along with annual targets. Whilst there have been challenges, this situation has arisen due to the lack of groundwork and investment put in place to deliver the action needed to meet climate targets, and we cannot afford to slip even further behind.

In light of this and the context set out above, Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS) urges you, as First Minister, to ensure your government takes the range of overdue and common-sense actions needed to quickly and fairly reduce emissions and realise the benefits of a Just Transition. In particular, SCCS is seeking your confirmation that the Scottish Government will:

- Transparently and urgently set out, within a Climate Change Plan, how policies and actions will ensure the pathway to net zero by 2045 will be achieved;
- Continue with and significantly enhance measures to reduce emissions in key sectors, including through the Agriculture Bill, Heat in Buildings Bill and route map to reduce car km by 20% by 2030;
- Publish as soon as possible the new Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan, with an unequivocal stance against any new oil and gas licences in the North Sea;
- Raise new and additional funds for climate action, protecting the least well-off, and use the devolved tax system to incentivise emission reduction - in line with the recommendations in our Financing Climate Justice report - while championing UK-wide measures to make the better off and the biggest polluters pay more.
- Continue with your work on and commitment to international climate justice, including championing and providing funding for addressing climate-induced losses and damages.

Further information on SCCS's priorities are outlined in this letter to the Cabinet Secretary following her roundtable with environmental organisations in April, as well as in our Climate Manifesto, which contains 119 policies that would deliver emissions reductions and a just transition.

We note your recent observation that “the pursuit of net zero has to take people and business with us” – this, in our view, should be self-evident, and is an argument for enhanced public engagement and ‘doing net zero well’, rather than for any roll back or delay to action. A just transition away from fossil fuels brings a huge number of opportunities and will make Scotland a fairer country, one with sustainable jobs for the future, a resilient, wellbeing based economy, improved health and warmer homes.

As you’ll be aware from initiatives in your own constituency, there is much community led climate action happening across Scotland, and there is overwhelming public support for politicians to get on with addressing it. This is shown in recent research by Climate Outreach and the Scottish Government’s People’s Panel. To sustain this high level of public support, fairness must be firmly embedded at the heart of how this transition is delivered.

Last week we hosted an event which brought together thirteen of the major faith leaders in Scotland, a number of key scientific representative bodies and civil society and youth representatives. Our aim was to remind all political parties, all political and business and public leaders that the need for collaboration and action has never been greater. It was heartening to see the shared passion for more action on climate from across all of these communities, who jointly recognise that there is no scientific or moral wiggle room in the need to take action.

In November 2023, your predecessor held a meeting of stakeholders at Bute House, ahead of COP28, to which SCCS was pleased to be invited. We would encourage you to build on this by hosting a larger, high profile climate summit, attended by a range of communities, stakeholders and sectors and with engagement of Global South partners, to set out your intentions on climate and build the support needed on a range of policy areas. We would be pleased to participate in this, as well as to advise on agenda, attendees, and other aspects.

Congratulations again on your new role. We look forward to you leading a Scottish Government that will deliver meaningful action to address the climate emergency, with cross party support for these steps, and to working with you, and your Ministers, to do so. We would be pleased to meet with you and/or relevant Ministers to hear about your plans and priorities for climate action, and to discuss how the challenges can be addressed and opportunities realised.

Yours sincerely,



Mike Robinson
Chair, Stop Climate Chaos Scotland

About Stop Climate Chaos Scotland:

Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS) is the largest civil society coalition in Scotland, with over 70 organisations campaigning together on climate change. Our members include environment, faith and international development organisations, trade and student unions, and community groups, and together we represent over 1 million people. We call on the UK and Scottish Governments to take bold action, across all relevant policy areas, to tackle climate change, with Scotland delivering our fair share of action to limit global temperature rises to 1.5 degrees and supporting climate justice around the world.