



**DISCUSSION SESSION PAPER**

**Session 6: A discussion on the proposed Climate Change  
(Scotland) Bill**

**Stewart Stevenson MSP, Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and  
Climate Change**

**David Sigsworth, Chair, Scottish Environment Protection Agency**

## BUSINESS IN THE PARLIAMENT CONFERENCE – 22 FEBRUARY 2008

### A discussion on the proposed Climate Change (Scotland) Bill

**Hosted by** *Stewart Stevenson MSP, Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change*

**Chaired by** *David Sigsworth, Chair, Scottish Environment Protection Agency*

***“Climate change threatens our people, our economy, our societies, and our very existence. It can only be tackled if we all work together ... in Scotland, in the UK, and across the world.”***

John Swinney, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth  
Introduction of Scottish Climate Change Bill 21 June 2007

The Scottish Government's purpose is to create a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth.

Recognising that climate change is one of the most serious threats we face the Scottish Government is determined that Scotland will play its part in rising to this global challenge. Through the Government Economic Strategy and Scottish Budget SR 2007 the Scottish Government has set out its commitment to climate change including the introduction of strategic targets which combine raising the GDP growth rate with ambitions to set a mandatory target of cutting emissions by 80% by 2050.

On January 29 2008, the Scottish Government published a consultation which set out proposals for a Scottish Climate Change Bill and seeks views on options for a Bill. The objective for this consultation is to ensure that all interested parties have the opportunity to contribute their opinions at an early stage of policy development. The consultation asks important questions about the shape of the proposals and what issues should be taken into account when developing a Bill.

There is an overwhelming economic case for a Bill - the Stern Review shows that the future costs of the impact of a changing climate (up to 20% global GDP) far outweigh the costs of taking action now to combat climate change (around 1%). With early action, the cost for each household can be limited to around £100 a year by 2030.

Tackling climate change can also offer clear and tangible benefits to Scotland, bringing new jobs, cost savings and opportunities for sustainable economic growth. Projections suggest new markets likely to be worth at least 500 billion dollars (globally) by 2050.

A Bill will create a long-term framework for current and successive administrations in Scotland to tackle climate change. This framework will help build a sustainable future for Scotland as we move towards a low carbon economy. It will drive decisions across government and business to help reduce emissions and provide certainty for investment decisions.

Key aspects of the consultation include the nature of the target, how it is measured, what is needed to ensure continuous progress, and the best method of advice, scrutiny and reporting.

## Consultation Proposals

- Set a statutory target to reduce Scottish emissions by 80% by 2050,
- Create a framework of emission budgets for Scottish emissions in the shorter term, to set out a pathway towards the 2050 target,
- Ensure transparent, robust and independent advice on when, and to what level, cuts in emissions should be made;
- An annual measure of progress and robust scrutiny of that progress;
- Allow specific measures to help reduce emissions or adapt to the impacts climate change including new responsibilities or powers for local authorities.

The Scottish Government met with four key groups of stakeholders to inform development of the options for consultation: non-governmental organisations, business and industry, the public sector, and academic/research. Work will continue to gather vital scientific and economic information to ensure that the Bill proposals are robust and credible. This information will complement the responses received to the consultation.

The closing date for the consultation is 23 April 2008.

Ultimately addressing the urgent social, economic and environmental challenge of climate change we will only be successful if everyone of us accepts responsibility and acts sustainably. The Scottish Government is confident that government, business and all the people of Scotland are ready to rise to the challenge of climate change. The proposed Climate Change Bill will provide the long-term framework need to do that. It is vital that we get this Bill right as it will provide the basis for action in Scotland on climate change for the next 40 years.

**For further information and to review the Scottish Climate Change Bill Consultation please visit [www.scotland.gov.uk/climatechangebill](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/climatechangebill)**

### Scotland's Climate Change Facts

Scotland's emissions are falling. Between 1990 and 2005, greenhouse gas emissions fell by around 16% from 64.4 to 54.5 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e. As part of this reduction, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions fell by 13% – almost double that of the UK average decrease of 6.4%. Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions are around 0.2% of global emissions.

Though the general trend is that emissions have been falling, total emissions levels have fluctuated by as much as 6% year on year. These annual fluctuations are largely due to changes in emissions from energy generation, which are influenced by factors out with the control of Scottish Ministers - such as the relative price of fossil fuels and weather conditions.

This reduction in emissions has been achieved at the same time as a 36% growth in Scotland's economy.

Encouraging as these figures are, on balance each person in Scotland currently contributes twice the global average in emissions. Much of the reduction in emissions has come through the decline in heavy industry since 1990 and through the increased absorption of CO<sub>2</sub> by afforestation.

The highest emitting sectors in Scotland are energy generation, transport and business, collectively they currently account for around three quarters of all Scottish emissions. Since 1990, energy supply emissions have fallen by 10% and business emissions have fallen by

22%. However, in line with the trend in Europe, Scottish transport emissions have increased by 11%.

Scotland is already feeling the effects of a changing climate - temperatures have risen in every season and in all parts of the country and heavy rainfall events have increase significantly in winter particularly in the north and west. Some degree of further climate change is unavoidable as the impacts of climate change over the next 30 or 40 years have been determined by past and present emissions.

The implications of a changing climate for Scotland are significant. Future climate scenarios suggest that during the 21st century our climate will become wetter and stormier. Scotland must adapt to this change if it is to minimise the impacts of costly disruptions and safeguard the continued smooth functioning of services and infrastructure.

Scottish Government  
February 2008

### **Key discussion questions to be discussed during the climate change breakout session**

1. What changes to current legislation or new legislation would help business to reduce emissions and/or adapt to climate change?
2. What are the opportunities to be gained by Scotland's early and ambitious action to reduce emissions and deliver a low carbon economy?
3. Do the proposals for a Scottish Climate Change Bill provide business and industry with enough certainty that Government in Scotland will take action to reduce emissions and will therefore drive change across the private sector?
4. Emission budget periods designed to make sure there is continuous and sustained progress need to be set in advance, particularly to give an indication to business and industry of the reduction which may be required. How far in advance should these be set so that business and industry can properly invest in the necessary infrastructure?
5. When setting targets and budgets, what is the right balance between these being based on Scotland's contribution towards avoiding dangerous climate change and what we know is realistically possible to achieve?
6. A commitment already exists amongst many businesses operating in Scotland to address the challenge of climate change. What opportunities are there to build on this encouraging business to share best practice, identify opportunities and challenge each other to do more?