

WRITTEN SUBMISSION FROM IAIN HANNAH

Dear Convener of the TICC Committee

I would be grateful if you and your Committee would consider my views in relation to the Climate Change (Scotland) Bill.

2009 is a critical year for climate change, as internationally we seek to create a new global deal to tackle this massive threat to our planet, and here in Scotland there is a huge opportunity to enact the most progressive climate change legislation in the world.

While variation in global climatic conditions is by no means unusual based on geological evidence of prior periods of climate change, the current phase of global warming is unprecedented in its speed. The speed of this dynamic breaches what can be accommodated through normal ecosystem adjustment mechanisms, and as a result there is a clear danger (and growing evidence, such as the sharp decline in Scottish Puffin breeding success) of severe damage to ecosystems and the environment on a global scale.

Much remains unknown about other consequences that could be unleashed by rising global temperatures, including disruption of the Gulf Stream, or destabilisation of gas hydrates. In view of these consequences society needs to act swiftly and effectively in halting and reversing the factors contributing to global warming, of which reduction in CO₂ emissions is one important element.

Some of the required changes require a major change of direction in areas like transportation and power generation, but there are a large number of small changes that can be made at the individual level. In many cases these individual changes require minimal effort. Unfortunately, this alone does not assure that they will take place, and politicians must therefore drive this process, in some cases through large scale policy actions aimed at issues like transport, but in others by leading by example. The Scottish Climate Change Bill will form the central pillar of these efforts and I would appeal to you to ensure that the Bill, through its targets and policies, tackles these issues in a serious, inclusive and convincing way.

I know that the legislation can be strengthened or weakened as it goes through the Scottish Parliament. I welcome the long-term target of at least an 80% reduction in all greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. However the Bill needs to be strengthened further to ensure the action it prompts will tackle emissions and avoid dangerous climate change.

I hope you can make sure Scotland gets a strong Climate Change Act that ensures:

- Serious action to reduce emissions - starting now. The time for action must be now, so the Bill must require at least 3% annual reductions in emissions year-on-year (in line with the SNP Manifesto commitment), starting immediately and not just in ten years time. Delaying a requirement for at least 3% reductions in emissions until 2020 means action will be too late.
- All emissions are addressed from the start. Ministers have made this commitment, yet the Bill says emissions from international aviation and shipping will only be included after more consultation and legislation. The Bill should make sure all emissions are included from the start.
- Scotland gets a Scottish Climate Change Commission that understands the unique Scottish context, data and policies. The Commission will advise and support delivery of the emissions reduction targets in Scotland, and critically will support their scrutiny in the Scottish Parliament.

- A limit on carbon trading. A limit on the amount of emissions reductions that Scotland can buy from overseas. This is vital if the Bill is to ensure Scotland benefits from real domestic emissions reduction and does its fair share to tackle climate change.
- Robust reporting to help Parliament hold Scottish Ministers and Government to account. The spirit of the Bill is good, but the mechanisms and processes need to be strong, transparent and ensure accountability, with scrutiny always in the public domain.
- Scotland counts all its emissions. As well as direct emissions we should also be reporting on consumption-based emissions - those arising in another country when they produce the goods that we buy.
- All public bodies have a duty to deliver the targets set out in this Bill from the start Public bodies have a critical role to play in delivering the necessary emissions reductions and a duty within the Climate Change Bill would ensure they take the appropriate action to deliver their fair share.

I am willing to play my part in reducing emissions and believe Scotland can lead the way in tackling climate change. Now I am looking to the Scottish Parliament to deliver strong climate change legislation that must be implemented urgently, could be the best in the world and could be a blueprint for other developed nations.

Yours sincerely
Mr IAIN HANNAH