



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## **RURAL AFFAIRS, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

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c/o Clerk to the Committee

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Dear Minister

### **COP21 Summit and Scottish Government climate change policy**

Thank you for giving oral evidence to the Committee on 11 November regarding the Scottish Government's participation as part of the UK Delegation to the COP21 Climate Change summit in Paris, and for your follow up letter of 26 November, setting out the information you undertook to provide to the Committee.

We have also received follow up letters from the Minister for Business, Energy and Tourism, Fergus Ewing on community energy projects and from the Minister for Transport and the Islands, Derek MacKay on the recharging network for electric vehicles across Scotland.<sup>1</sup>

The evidence session with you provided an opportunity for the Committee to review issues relating to Scottish climate change policy more broadly, as well as the role of the Scottish Government in tackling climate change. Consequently, we are seeking further information from you on a number of issues.

### **Scottish Government's participation in the COP21 Summit**

The Committee is of the view that the commitments made during the COP21 summit in Paris will play an important role in shaping Scotland's future efforts to help tackle climate change. We would welcome your view on the outcomes of the

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from the Minister for Business, Energy and Tourism, 11 November 2015: [http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4\\_RuralAffairsClimateChangeandEnvironmentCommittee/General%20Documents/20151126\\_Fergus\\_Ewing\\_on\\_COP21\\_Paris\\_Evidence\\_Session\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_RuralAffairsClimateChangeandEnvironmentCommittee/General%20Documents/20151126_Fergus_Ewing_on_COP21_Paris_Evidence_Session_WEB.pdf). Letter from the Minister for Transport and the Islands, 26 November 2015: [http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4\\_RuralAffairsClimateChangeandEnvironmentCommittee/General%20Documents/20151130\\_Minister\\_for\\_transport\\_and\\_islands\\_on\\_electric\\_vehicles.pdf](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_RuralAffairsClimateChangeandEnvironmentCommittee/General%20Documents/20151130_Minister_for_transport_and_islands_on_electric_vehicles.pdf)

Paris summit and the implications for Scotland's climate change policies. In particular, the Committee is interested in the following—

- what the Scottish Government's view is on the need for countries like Scotland to consider setting more ambitious targets;
- what progress was made at the COP21 summit in securing the scale of commitments necessary to avoid dangerous climate change and what does the Scottish Government consider to be the greatest challenges in ensuring that these commitments are realised;
- how the negotiating stance of the UK delegation at the summit reflected Scottish climate change priorities in terms of the outcomes achieved;
- what the outcomes from 'Oceans Day' at the COP21 summit were, and what role the Scottish Ministers played in this;
- what progress there has been in the work of the three OSPAR committees which Scottish Ministers chair and how Scottish climate change policy is shaping their agenda.

### **Scotland's leadership role on climate change**

During the evidence session with you on 11 November, reference was made to work being undertaken to produce Scotland's climate change emission data by sector, especially in terms of the heavy emitters such as transport, agriculture and housing.<sup>2</sup> The Committee would welcome further information on what Scotland has learned about reducing emissions from those significant sectors and how we are sharing this knowledge with other countries facing similar challenges.

The Committee would also welcome an update on how climate change commitments will be supported in the Scottish Government's 2016/17 budget.

### **RPP3 and the future delivery of Scotland's climate change targets**

The delivery of Scotland's emission targets and the approach to RPP3 will be vital in meeting Scotland's climate change commitments. In light of the outcomes of the COP21 summit the Committee would be interested to know how the development of RPP3 will reflect the international commitments reached in Paris.

Following the failure<sup>3</sup> to achieve Scotland's emission reduction targets in 2012<sup>4</sup> and 2013<sup>5</sup>, the Scottish Government announced a number of policy initiatives and funding commitments. The Committee would like you to provide detailed information on the expected emission reductions associated with each of these

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<sup>2</sup> RACCE Official Report 11 November 2015, Col 14:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10204&mode=pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Failure to achieve targets for 2012 and 2013 are partly a consequence of changes to the inventory used to calculate the UK and Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions inventory. Changes reflect improvements in methodology and new data sources and include, for example, revised information on the impact of specific greenhouse gases, such as methane.

<sup>4</sup> Ministerial statement 10 June 2014: <http://news.scotland.gov.uk/Speeches-Briefings/Climate-change-statement-d72.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> Ministerial statement 9 June 2015: <http://news.scotland.gov.uk/Speeches-Briefings/Ministerial-statement-on-progress-on-climate-change-mitigation-19c9.aspx>

commitments in the coming years and on the contribution these measures will make to the shortfall from previously missed annual targets of 17.5 million tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent, and to provide a breakdown of the CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions.<sup>6</sup>

Your letter of 26 November provides welcome detail on the planning and public engagement the Government intends to carry out for the development of RPP3 in late 2016. The Committee would welcome more detail on the anticipated timescales for preparing, and consulting on, the draft RPP3.

In the evidence session you reiterated the Scottish Government's view that the draft RPP3 was the next practical opportunity for the Government to report to the Parliament on the failure to meet emissions targets in 2012 and 2013 in terms of Section 36 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. The Committee remains concerned by this approach and recommends that if the emissions data for 2014, which is scheduled for publication in mid-2016, reveals that the 2014 target has been missed the Government should publish a stand-alone report under Section 36, before the end of 2016, highlighting the key statistics and setting out the actions that the Government intend to take in address the shortfall. The Committee also call on the Government to adopt this reporting approach in future years where targets are missed again rather than encompassing this reporting requirement into the RPP development processes.

Mainstreaming action on climate change in the public, private and third sector is vital to ensure that Scotland meets its emission reduction targets. The Committee would welcome an update from you on the action the Scottish Government is taking to coordinate policy across the Scottish Administration and ensure all departments and agencies have the delivery of Scotland's climate change targets as a core policy goal. The Committee would also welcome further information on how the Scottish Government's Cabinet Sub-Committee on Climate Change is supporting the delivery of this approach.

### **Impact of DEFRA and DECC budget cuts**

The recent UK Spending Review of 25 November 2015, announced that the UK Department for Environment, Rural Affairs and Food (DEFRA) would receive a 30% cut in its budget over the lifetime of the current UK Parliament (2015-2020), and that the UK Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) would receive at 22% cut over the same period.<sup>7</sup> The Committee would welcome a view on the impact the Scottish Government believes the proposed budget cuts to DEFRA and DECC will have on Scotland meeting its emission reduction targets.

The Committee also requests that the Scottish Government outlines what new actions it is now considering to mitigate the impact of these cuts in meeting Scotland's future climate change targets and to secure the required investment.

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<sup>6</sup> These targets include emissions of all climate change gases generated as a result of human activity, not just CO<sub>2</sub>.

<sup>7</sup> DECC website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/deccs-settlement-at-the-spending-review-2015>

## EV Rapid Charging Points

The Committee welcomes the detail provided by the Minister for Transport and the Islands, Derek MacKay in terms of the work underway in providing the network of rapid charge points for Electric Vehicles (EVs). The Committee is writing directly to all 32 Scottish local authorities seeking updates on their work relating to the provision of EV rapid charging points in their areas. However, the Committee remains concerned that there is a lack of coordination between public and private sectors in providing a comprehensive single online portal showing information for all EV charging points across Scotland. The Committee would welcome information on whether the Scottish Government is undertaking work to address this issue.

The Committee notes the parliamentary debate which took place on 18 November 2015 on air pollution in Scotland and the targets for meeting the EU ambient air quality directive<sup>8</sup>. The Committee would welcome the Government's views on the role that EVs can play in improving air quality, especially in urban areas of Scotland.

We would welcome a response from you to these questions by 31 January 2016.

Yours sincerely



Rob Gibson MSP  
Convener

CC      Derek MacKay MSP, Minister for Transport and the Islands  
         Fergus Ewing MSP, Minister for Minister for Business, Energy and Tourism

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<sup>8</sup> Scottish Parliament, *Official Report 18 November 2015*, Cols 81 to 98:  
<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10211&mode=pdf>