

Edward Mountain MSP
Convener to the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP
Sent by email to: netzero.committee@parliament.scot

Date: 13 September 2024

Dear Edward

Many thanks for inviting me to give evidence at the 25th meeting of the Net Zero, Energy and Transport committee 2024. This letter is following the request for a clarification on views on the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill, specifically on whether the Bill should include timelines for the publication of the carbon budgets and the draft Climate Change Plan, including what those timescales should be.

The CCC believe that the Bill should include a requirement on the date that each carbon budget be set. As set out in our [14 May 2024 letter to Cabinet Secretary Máiri McAllan](#) advising on how to design and implement carbon budgets in Scotland: “budgets should be set into law sufficiently far in advance to allow business investment cycles to react and ensure that required enabling policies can be developed.” The level of the budget should only be set following advice from the CCC, which is specified in the Bill as “must have regard to the most up-to-date advice they have received from the relevant body”.

The CCC therefore proposes that:

- The first three Scottish carbon budgets for the periods 2026-2030, 2031-2035 and 2036-2040 be set as soon as possible following our upcoming advice and by the end of 2025 at the latest.
 - If requested, the CCC's advice for Scotland on the first three carbon budgets will be published in Spring 2025, following advice to the UK on its Seventh Carbon Budget (which covers the period 2038-2042) to be published in early 2025. This should give sufficient time for this advice to be considered prior to setting the budgets.
- The fourth carbon budget for the period 2041-2045, be set by the end of 2031.
 - The CCC will be providing advice to the UK on the level of its Eighth Carbon Budget, (covering the period 2043-2047) in 2030 with the UK budget required to be legislated by 30th June 2031. Setting the Fourth Scottish Carbon Budget by 2031 aligns with this timeline and gives sufficient time to implement the required policies to achieve it.

- The five-year period for requesting advice from the CCC on whether legislated targets are still appropriate (Section 2C in the Act) be aligned with the above timelines. This would mean that when requesting advice on the level of new carbon budgets, the CCC also advises on whether the currently legislated targets are still appropriate.
 - Consequently, the CCC's advice in Spring 2025 would assess whether the 2045 target is still appropriate and any subsequent advice would also assess whether any currently legislated carbon budgets are still appropriate.

The CCC's May 2024 letter stated that "The Scottish Government should also consider aligning the start and end years for budgets with the UK carbon budgets, as policies developed in Scotland will need to contribute to delivering the emissions reductions required under both frameworks." While the CCC believes this is the simplest approach, there are also advantages to starting the cycle in 2026 as proposed in the Bill, with a new accompanying Climate Change Plan.

A draft of a Climate Change Plan should be published in time to allow for parliamentary scrutiny of the proposed budgets. The Bill currently specifies that the Climate Change Plan should be published "as soon as practicable" after the budget is set. However, publishing a draft of the plan together with the proposed budget level would enable thorough parliamentary scrutiny of the proposed policies to reach the budget. The final Climate Change Plan would need to be published following the setting of the budget, with any adjustments to the draft made to ensure it is consistent with the legislated budget level. Assuming a draft plan is available at the time of the proposed budget, the CCC proposes that the final Climate Change Plan should be published no later than one year after the setting of the budget in law.

Please let me know if you have any further questions or requests for clarification.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Emily Nurse
Head of Net Zero, Climate Change Committee