



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee

Clare Adamson MSP
Convener
Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee
13 November 2024

Dear Clare,

Advice of the Permanent Secretary to the Scottish Government

I am writing following the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee's consideration of the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Target) (Scotland) Bill. The Bill was first announced by the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Energy in Parliament on 18 April. She said this would be introduced and considered to an expedited timetable.

However, the Bill was not introduced until 5 September. The Scottish Government cited the announcement of the UK Election on 22 May as a reason the Bill was not introduced prior to the summer recess. The impact of this was a reduced period for Committee scrutiny of this important Bill, which the Scottish Government wanted expedited through Parliament for legal reasons.

We noted published advice on UK election "purdah" from the Permanent Secretary to the Scottish Government, issued just after the then Prime Minister's 22 May announcement, which states: "...that essential Government business should and will continue, ensuring Civil Servants deliver on your Government's priorities consistent with the pre-election guidance. This includes progressing legislation already introduced to the Scottish Parliament, and legislation which the Scottish Government has already announced it intends to bring forward."¹

In Stage 1 report on the Bill, we noted—

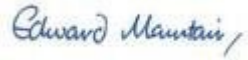
"... that advice to the First Minister on UK general election "purdah" from the Scottish Government Permanent Secretary is open to interpretation as to whether "progressing" proposed legislation that has already been announced in the Scottish Parliament includes introducing it. It is not helpful that there is this ambiguity and we will be writing to the Scottish Parliament Constitution, Europe and External Relations Committee asking if it could consider this matter."

¹ Scottish Government (2024). [Pre-election period advice: letter to the First Minister](#)

Contact: Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee, The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP. Email netzero.committee@parliament.scot. We welcome calls through Relay UK and in BSL through Contact Scotland BSL.

We therefore highlight this issue to you as a matter you may wish to consider in an effort to secure more clarity on this issue the next time there is a UK general election.

With thanks for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Edward Mountain".

**Edward Mountain MSP
Convener**