

Climate Change Bill

June 2018

The Scottish Government has published the [Climate Change \(Emissions Reduction Targets\) \(Scotland\) Bill](#). This aims to raise the ambition of the 2009 Climate Change (Scotland) Act, following the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement. The Bill amends the earlier Act, with a target of a 90% reduction of emissions by 2050, and measures requiring ministers to regularly review “whether the time is right to specify a net-zero target year.”

UNISON is part of the Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS) coalition of civil society organisations campaigning on climate change. SCCS has been calling for the new Bill to set a target of net zero emissions (a 100% reduction target) by 2050 at the latest. The coalition has called the Bill “[hugely disappointing](#)” in failing to do this, despite [more than 99%](#) of consultation responses supporting net zero by 2050 or sooner.

Scotland's 2009 Act was genuinely world leading legislation, with targets to cut emissions from 1990 levels by 80% by 2050 and 42% by 2020. The 42% target was achieved six years early and this month the statutory annual climate target [was met](#) for the third year running, with Scotland achieving a 49% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. As SCCS said, everyone who played their part in achieving this should be proud.

When the latest annual target was met, SCCS stressed that the success shows “[setting stretching targets works](#)” by driving innovation and strong policy delivery. This success, along with support from the public, leading scientists and farming groups, should give the Scottish Government the confidence to aim high once again and set a net zero emissions target, by 2050 at the latest, in the new Climate Change Bill.” Indeed, the Scottish Government's [consultation in 2008](#) said that the target then needed to be “more ambitious than what current technologies can deliver in order to help provide an incentive to develop new technologies.”

A [Fact Check](#) done by The Ferret online investigative journalism platform judged SNP arguments that the Bill would see Scotland set the toughest emissions targets in the world to be a false claim.

Some of the key SCCS asks for the Bill include: A target of net-zero emissions by 2050 at the latest, raising 2030's target from 66% to 77%, and delivering the necessary related increase in policy delivery. Briefings on these and others, including energy efficiency, transport, and linking budgets with the climate plan are [here](#).

UNISON is part of the Just Transition Partnership (JTP), with the STUC, sister unions Unite Scotland, UCU Scotland, CWU Scotland and PCS Scotland, and Friends of the Earth Scotland and WWF Scotland. The JTP's spring briefing said the Just Transition Commission must [be put on a statutory basis](#) in the Bill. It should advise the Scottish Government on a transition to a prosperous low carbon economy in which costs and rewards are shared fairly, and employment levels and job quality are protected and improved.

Stop Climate Chaos Scotland and the JTP each submitted a briefing to the [June meeting](#) of the Environment, Climate Change & Land Reform Committee, for the evidence session with the Bill team.

UNISON branches are asked to encourage members to take a few minutes to back this [SCCS E-Action](#), calling for a stronger Bill and to support a mass lobby outside the Scottish Parliament on Wed 19 September. A more detailed briefing and update on how we want to see the Bill improved will follow in the autumn.