



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee

Gillian Martin MSP  
Acting Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Energy  
Scottish Government

**17 January 2025**

Dear Cabinet Secretary

### Scrutiny of climate change targets and plans

I note recent confirmation that the Climate Change Committee will provide its advice to the Scottish Government on the first 5-year Scottish carbon budget on 21 May 2025, and you provided some initial thoughts on this when giving evidence to the Committee on the Scottish budget on 14 January.

As you know, it is the provision of the CCC advice that starts off the revised procedure for setting the next Scottish Government Climate Change Plan, following the Parliament's passing of the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill (now Act).

In your [20 September 2024](#) letter sent during consideration of that Bill you outlined how, if the CCC were to provide their advice by before end March 2025, that would provide just enough time under the revised procedure for you to lay draft Climate Change Plan before the Parliament before the summer recess. The Scottish Government's evidence on that Bill repeatedly stressed the need for urgency in having a new Climate Change Plan in place; a view which the Committee shares.

I appreciate the importance of the CCC taking the time to prepare robust and realistic advice, and that it has finite resources and other responsibilities to fulfil. However, with dissolution now just 14 months away, I am keen to ensure that the Parliament and its committees can play a full role in scrutinising the draft Climate Change Plan, as I am sure you are too.

In the Committee's Stage 1 report on the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill, we said that—

“... effective Parliamentary scrutiny of targets and plans is a crucial component of overall net zero delivery and should not suffer due to the timing of this Bill's introduction or the Scottish Government's understandable wish to re-establish momentum.

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

It is therefore important to ensure that:

- This Committee (and its successors) have time to thoroughly consider proposed Scottish carbon budgets;
- The Scottish Parliament as a whole has time to consider and test the robustness of delivery proposals alongside the proposed carbon budgets; and
- Stakeholders and the public can reflect on proposals and feed in their views., and that the Scottish Government has sufficient time to reflect on and respond to the Parliament’s recommendations.”

Your 20 September letter 2024 indicates that if CCC advice is pushed into May this could result in the 120 days allowed for parliamentary scrutiny of the draft CCP running very close to dissolution. It appears this could leave very little time for the Scottish Government to consider the Parliament’s recommendations, prior to laying the final CCP.

The Committee’s Stage 1 report also discussed the importance of the Scottish Government and the Committee maintaining a dialogue on key milestones under the revised scrutiny process once the Bill came into law, in order to ensure opportunities for Parliamentary scrutiny are optimal. I am writing to you in furtherance of that, so as to secure formal notification that the date has been communicated from you, and the implications this has.

I would therefore be grateful if you could write to the Committee setting out a revised “roadmap” of key timelines for getting the next Climate Change Plan agreed, on the basis of the CCC providing advice on 21 May, setting out dates for all key Parliamentary and other milestones by, as the Scottish Government understands them. I would be grateful if this response could also set out any areas where the Scottish Government sees some potential flexibility in how the timeline could unfold, whilst recognising that decisions on scheduling are formally taken by the Parliament.

As this is a matter that has a direct and almost immediate impact on the Committee’s work planning, I would be grateful for a response by 22 January, so that we may reflect on it at our next work programme discussion. I am also conscious of the Committee’s role in coordinating with other subject committees on their own climate change scrutiny work. Having clarity as soon as possible on how the Scottish Government envisages the process unfolding will also help them with their work planning.

Finally, I underline the importance of the Committee continuing to be kept up to date on all relevant developments concerning the carbon budget and CCP as we go forward through this revised process.

Yours sincerely,

Edward Mountain MSP, Convener