

20211116 Memo to AERA Committee on Climate Change Bill.pdf

To JC - CLIMATE CHANGE (No.2) BILL.PDF



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

**Committee for Justice
Room 242
Parliament Buildings**

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**From: Christine Darrah
Clerk to the Committee for Justice**

Date: 16 November 2021

**To: Nick Henry
Clerk to the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs**

Climate Change (No.2) Bill

Dear Nick

Following the call for evidence by the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs on the Climate Change (No. 2) Bill the Justice Committee agreed to request information from the Department of Justice on any relevant provisions in the Bill and the likely implications for the Department and/or justice agencies and Non Departmental Public Bodies.

At its meeting on 14 October 2021 the Committee noted the response from the Department of Justice and agreed to forward it to the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.

**Christine Darrah
Clerk to the Committee for Justice**

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6 October 2021

Dear Christine,

CLIMATE CHANGE (No.2) BILL

Thank you for your correspondence of 20 September 2021 asking for information and comments in relation to the likely impacts of the Climate Change (No.2) Bill on the Department, its Agencies and Non Departmental Public Bodies.

We welcome action directed towards combatting the causes and effects that climate change. This Climate Change (No.2) Bill seeks to take this forward. We are keen that action is taken, with the degree of urgency the matter requires to address the causes and effects of climate change.

This Climate Change (No.2) Bill's target of reducing to net zero GHG (82% of 1990 baseline) is more achievable and in keeping with the Climate Change Committee (CCC) recommendation (82% reduction of 1990 baseline). We are keen that, where possible, its recommendations should be implemented as soon as is possible and that any delay should be avoided. We further note that, where possible, it would be desirable for those targets to be revised and refined to accelerate progress in line with improvements in technology and swifter roll out in some areas.

In relation to the proposed Bill's oversight structures, we believe that independence in this area is vital. The Climate Change (No.2) Bill does not propose an independent NI Climate Office and Climate Change Commissioner. We would be in favour of such governance and oversight structures and these should be robust and seen to be independent from the influence of Government.

The proposed Bill is likely to have financial implications for the Department of Justice as we seek to reduce our carbon footprint; however, without further detail it is not possible to identify or quantify any potential impacts or costs at this stage. It should be acknowledged that whilst it will require initial investment, some of the measures to reduce carbon footprint may result in medium to long term savings. Again, in the absence of specific actions this cannot be quantified.

DoJ has previously indicated support for the proposals under development by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs relating to the UK Climate Change Committee advice on the Level of the Sixth Carbon Budget. This advice was based on the recommendations of the Climate Change Committee (CCC).

The CCC undertook extensive analysis and has come to the conclusion that an equitable target for Northern Ireland's contribution to the UK target should be 82%. They provided a rationale for this target and set out some difficulties in setting a higher target.

DoJ has also stated that averting climate disaster should be a priority across the Executive and wider society and so, where evidence indicates we can be more ambitious in terms of timescales and targets, we should make every effort to do so.

Whilst DoJ is mainly a consumer and, as such, has little policy influence on climate change issues, we are determined that we have a role to play in order to avert the climate crisis.

Currently there are the two Climate Change Bills progressing through the Assembly. It would be important to have one piece of governing legislation with clear timescales and targets which are specific, achievable and where affordability issues have been taken into account. To that end we are pleased to note the engagement between the sponsors of the Climate Change (No.2) Bill and those responsible for the Climate Change (No.1) Bill with a view to reaching an agreement on one single Bill that will proceed through the legislative process.



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