



30<sup>th</sup> April 2013

**Submission to Oireachtas Joint Committee on the Environment, Culture and the Gaeltacht on the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Bill 2013.**

The science of climate change is now beyond doubt and we are already seeing the impacts of climate change with approximately a one degree C global temperature increase. The overwhelming scientific consensus is that global warming must be capped at two degrees C or preferably substantially less.

The Stop Climate Chaos coalition call on the Government to:

- Push for an international agreement to keep the rise in global temperatures to 2 degrees C or less.
- Ensure Ireland does its fair share to prevent climate chaos by introducing a climate change law which provides for an emissions reduction target of 80 – 95% below 1990 levels for 2050.
- Ensure developing countries can access additional, appropriate and adequate resources to enable them to adapt to the current and future impacts of climate change.
- Ensure that natural environment considerations are integrated into adaptation and mitigation strategies for dealing with climate change.

Stop Climate Chaos has continually called for a strong Irish Climate Bill that includes:

- Legally binding emission reduction targets
- Five-year carbon budgets that meet up to these targets
- The establishment of an independent climate change commission to advise Government with the power to publish its own reports.

Stop Climate Chaos recommends that the following proposals be taken into consideration by the Oireachtas Joint Committee on the Environment, Culture and the Gaeltacht.

**The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Bill 2013 should:**

- **Include an emissions reduction target of 20% below 1990 levels for 2020 and 80% - 95% below 1990 levels for 2050.** The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has indicated that developed countries like Ireland must reduce emissions by 80 – 95% by 2050. We feel that there is no justification for omitting this solid scientifically based objective from the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Bill and without these targets, slippage is inevitable. Ireland is committed to a 20% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions under its EU target, so putting this into legislation signals our ambition and the urgency with which we treat the climate crisis. A European 2050 target is yet to be agreed however the European Council has stated the need to cut emissions by 80 – 95% by 2050 in line with the science. Targets for 2030 and 2040 should also be set to put Ireland on a trajectory for meeting the 2050 target. Putting these international commitments into domestic law will provide certainty for businesses and householders and will ensure timely and adequate action to cut greenhouse gas emissions. Without these targets set in national law there is a risk that the Government will not act in time to reach these targets.
- **Provide for the Low Carbon Roadmap to be more frequent than every 7 years.** To reflect the five year political cycle, the Low Carbon Roadmap should be revised at least every five years and it should include carbon budgets. Longer term targets act as a statement of Ireland's intention in emission reductions at a single point in time whereas carbon budgets capture the total emissions over the period. Carbon budgets ensure political accountability and timely action. Longer term targets fall outside the lifetime of any Government so carbon budgets provide the impetus for governments to act.
- **Ensure the Expert Advisory Body is independent and has the power to make recommendations to Government and publish its own reports.** The Bill in its current form leaves the publication of reports to the Government's discretion. In order for the Expert Advisory Body to be transparent and accountable it must have the power to publish its own reports.
- **Include the principle of Climate Justice.** Ireland has a responsibility to people in developing countries who are already feeling the impacts of climate change – a crisis they played no part in creating. The Climate Bill is about mapping out a strong and sustainable future for Ireland. It is also about ensuring that Ireland lives up to its global responsibilities. It is the poorest citizens in the developing and middle income nations who suffer most from the often devastating impacts of climate change. As a nation that has benefited from our own development to date, we need to do our fair share. Including the principle of Climate Justice in the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Bill is the basis of making this happen.