



14th June 2017

Dear Taoiseach,

Re: Request for a meeting to discuss National Mitigation Plan on climate change

Firstly, we wish to congratulate you on election as Taoiseach today.

We are writing to you on behalf of a group of umbrella organisations representing non-governmental development agencies, environmental organizations, faith-based organisations, young people and students that collectively advocate for climate action in line with the Paris Agreement and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

We have come together to write to you, as leader of Fine Gael and as your party's nominee for Taoiseach, because we believe that this generational shift in Ireland's political leadership represents a significant moment of opportunity to reset and strengthen Irish climate policy.

- Over the last two decades, Irish climate policy has been undermined by an implementation gap; while certain measures from prior National Climate Change Strategies have been implemented, many were delayed or not implemented at all. This is despite the extent of evidence highlighting the considerable social and economic costs of inaction on climate change.
- This year, however, the Government is set to consider the first National Mitigation Plan on climate change in ten years, launch a national dialogue on climate change, and give consideration to coordination of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Citizens' Assembly will also take up the issue of what the state needs to do to make Ireland a leader on climate change in the coming months. This combination of events provides a timely opportunity for a step-change in climate action to secure sustainable jobs, social justice and a healthy future. But grasping that opportunity will require strong and consistent political leadership to promote and facilitate a societal transformation like nothing we have seen before.

It is within this context that we very much welcome the explicit reference in your recent policy plan to furthering Ireland's climate policy agenda. Indeed, the pathway forward will require consistent political and departmental leadership, robust policy development and implementation, and critical, energetic and constructive engagement with stakeholders and the public. We believe that the necessary open and democratic debate about climate action in Ireland must be led from the top with a clear and unswerving commitment to fulfilling our international obligations, in order to protect Ireland from the catastrophic implications of a failure to deliver on the temperature limits set out in the Paris Agreement.

- Our recent analysis of the draft Mitigation Plan on climate change showed that if Ireland is to meet its national and international climate and energy commitments, and do its fair share of action to adhere to the principles of climate justice, a significant increase in ambition is required. Furthermore, and very importantly, our analysis also showed that the mitigation plan does not fulfil the tasks ascribed to it under Ireland’s Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act (2015). The Climate Act explicitly stipulates that the Mitigation Plan must identify the manner in which Ireland will achieve its national transition objective, and meet existing obligations on the State under European law and international agreements.

Given the shortcomings of the Plan, we are particularly concerned that there has been very little political and public debate on the Plan – despite it being a critical component of public policy.

The content of final Mitigation Plan will signal how serious the Government is in “playing its part”, as Enda Kenny put it, to achieve the objectives of the Paris Agreement. At the very least it needs to detail how Irish emissions will decline significantly year-on-year over the next five years and beyond to 2050, and fulfil the provisions of the Climate Act. Under the Act, Minister Naughten must have submitted the Plan to the Government before June 10th. We urge you to ensure the Government gives the Plan careful consideration and if it remains inadequate to the challenge, to use Section 4(4) of the Act to take the necessary time to modify the Plan before its adoption.

We would also like to meet with you at this moment of opportunity for climate policy in particular to discuss how we can i) support the processes and policies that will move us forward, ii) avoid further entrenchment of the implementation gap that has persisted in Irish climate policy, and iii) reap the social, economic and environmental benefits for Ireland of adequate climate action. We look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely,



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Annie Hoey
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