

Gillian Martin MSP  
Convener, Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh EH99 1SP

20 May 2019

Dear Gillian,

Thank you very much for the opportunity to appear before your Committee on Tuesday to explain our Net Zero advice. We received a number of questions regarding our advice on the recommended level of the interim emissions in the Climate Change Bill. I wanted to provide the Committee with some additional information to allow comparison with our previous recommendations which were made on a different basis.

As we explained in our evidence, our advice on a net-zero greenhouse gas emissions target for 2045 is prudent. It includes assumed increases in the estimates of Scottish emissions once the full range of peatland emissions are included in the scope of the Scottish emissions inventory and once global warming potentials (GWPs) are updated to those reported by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fifth Assessment Report. These adjustments make it significantly more challenging to reach net-zero emissions, but it was important to 'future proof' the advice against known forthcoming changes to the way emissions are counted, which could otherwise make the targets infeasible.

The Climate Change Bill requires legislation of interim targets for 2030 and 2040. In our Net Zero advice we provided recommended levels for these interim targets, so that they can be set consistent with the need to reach net-zero emissions by 2045. We consider it essential that the 2030 and 2040 interim targets are set on the same emissions accounting basis as the net-zero target, in order to avoid confusion and any perception of reduced ambition in future when translating targets to the new emissions accounting basis.

During the evidence session members raised the issue of how the level of the interim target we recommend for 2030 compares with our previous advice for a 66% reduction by that date. Our previous recommendation for a 66% reduction was made on the basis of the current emissions accounting methodology, without the increased scope of peatland emissions or the change to the GWPs.

As set out in the table below, our recommendation for a 70% reduction in Scottish greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 on the basis of assumed future methods of accounting for emissions would equate to a reduction of around 76% when accounting for emissions as is done currently.

Interim target recommendations for emissions reductions by 2030 and 2040 on the basis of future and current inventories, compared to 1990 levels, on the path to net-zero emissions by 2045			
	2030	2040	2045
Net Zero report targets (future inventory)	70%	90%	100%
Targets translated back to the current inventory	76%	96%	106%

**Notes:** In both cases, the path for emissions is assumed to be a straight line from the 2020 target for a 56% reduction based on the current emissions accounting to the Committee's Further Ambition scenario in 2050. On the basis of the assumed future inventory methodology, this would be a 49.5% reduction on 1990 emissions.

As we explained on Tuesday, our Net Zero advice focused principally on the date of achieving net-zero emissions. Defining a precise path for emissions between 2020 and the net-zero date is our next challenge – and will depend on a set of conditions that are difficult to predict at the moment in particular, the UK Government's decision to accept our advice and put a more ambitious UK-wide plan in place to meet net zero by 2050. Given the need to recommend interim targets immediately for the Climate Change Bill, we derived these by assuming a straight-line path for emissions between 2020 and 2045. Past performance shows this to be a reasonable assumption given limited sectoral information. We will undertake more detailed analysis of near-term emissions reductions for our advice on the UK sixth carbon budget in 2020, at which point we will be better placed to provide a more precise assessment of the path for Scottish emissions.

Yours sincerely,



Chris Stark

Chief Executive, Committee on Climate Change