



*The Royal Society
of Edinburgh*

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22-26 George Street,
Edinburgh,
EH2 2PQ

23 August 2018

Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee,
The Scottish Parliament,
Edinburgh,
EH99 1SP

Dear Convener,

Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill

As Scotland's National Academy, the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) has engaged consistently with issues of the environment and climate change. The Society has responded to numerous government and parliamentary consultations on these areas over the last several years, in addition to undertaking a major inquiry on *Facing up to Climate Change*¹, published in 2011.

The Committee may find the following Advice Papers, published by the RSE over the past few years to be of interest when considering the Bill:

- Air Departure Tax (2017)²
- Flooding (2017)³

¹ <https://www.rse.org.uk/inquiries/facing-up-to-climate-change/>

² <https://www.rse.org.uk/advice-papers/air-departure-tax/>

³ <https://www.rse.org.uk/advice-papers/flooding/>

- Air Passenger Duty (2016)⁴
- Environment, Energy and Climate (2016)⁵
- Renewable Energy Sector in Scotland (2016)⁶

The RSE has noted in the past that while both the Scottish and UK governments accept the scientific consensus around climate change - and have set targets to reduce carbon emissions, such as those contained in the Bill being examined by the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee - serious challenges still exist to ensure that action is taken around the world to curb the emissions which contribute to climate change, and ensure that clean, reliable, renewable technologies are harnessed.

As part of the RSE's current work examining the challenges and opportunities Scotland and the UK face as the United Kingdom undertakes the process of withdrawing from the European Union, the Society has also convened a subgroup specifically tasked with addressing the impacts of Brexit on the environment. This subgroup intends to publish an Advice Paper with its analysis in the coming months.

Scotland's Energy Future

A year ago, the RSE launched a major Inquiry into *Scotland's Energy Future*.⁷ The project has sought to gather evidence from all interested stakeholders: government, civic society, industry and local communities over the last 12 months.

The Inquiry's final report – the main goal of which will be to contribute to the debate about Scotland's energy supply, demand and use, while recognising our moral and environmental responsibilities – will draw upon written submissions solicited through a published call for evidence,⁸ public engagement events held across Scotland, and meetings with interested stakeholders. The Inquiry will assess the practicability, achievability and impact of all options available to Scotland. All information received will be analysed and assessed by the expert Committee convened by the RSE to undertake the project.

One of the primary aspects of the Inquiry's remit is to *take account of the environmental imperative to reduce carbon emissions, and associated political commitments*.

⁴ <https://www.rse.org.uk/advice-papers/air-passenger-duty/>

⁵ A position paper written by RSE Fellows as part of the Society's Enlightening the European Debate event series, in advance of the 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the EU <https://www.rse.org.uk/advice-papers/environment-energy-and-climate/>

⁶ <https://www.rse.org.uk/advice-papers/renewable-energy-sector-in-scotland/>

⁷ <https://www.rse.org.uk/energyinquiry/>

⁸ <http://www.rse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Call-for-Evidence-1.pdf>

Under normal circumstances, the RSE would look to respond fully to a consultation addressing the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill. However, since the consultation covers areas which are part of the RSE Inquiry, the Inquiry Committee does not wish to pre-empt its final report or present views on issues to which it is still seeking the input of stakeholders. The Society does, however, wish to highlight to the Committee the work it has undertaken in this area in recent years and confirm the intention to publish the final report of the RSE Inquiry into *Scotland's Energy Future* later this year.

The Royal Society of Edinburgh hopes to engage with the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee more fully as the Society's Inquiry draws to a close. Should you have any questions about the work of the RSE in this area, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Alison Elliot CBE FRSE
General Secretary