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13 August 2019

Dear Gillian,

Climate Change Plan Update

Thank you for your letter of 23rd July asking for clarity on the scope, process and expected timetable for the updated Climate Change Plan.

As the Committee is aware, the Scottish Government has committed to take action to ensure that Scotland plays its part in tackling the global climate emergency. It is in the context of an emergency response that the Government has committed to updating the climate change plan within 6 months of the Bill receiving Royal Assent, as recommended by the ECCLR Committee in its Stage 1 report. It is effectively an emergency update, which we have agreed to deliver in a quarter of the time it would normally take to deliver a full Climate Change Plan.

Given the reduction in the timetable for preparation, it seems reasonable that instead of the 90 days that the Committee would usually take to scrutinise a new plan (or the 120 days proposed in the Bill), that this is also reduced by the same margin. For this reason I am recommending that, for this update, the Committee completes its scrutiny within 30 days. The Scottish Government will then finalise the update over the subsequent 30 days, allowing the step-change in action that we all agree is necessary and that the Committee has pushed for.

I would also remind you that the Bill provides for annual monitoring reports to be laid in Parliament by each Cabinet member. This means that, following passage of the Bill, scrutiny of all policies and their effectiveness on the ground is going to be even greater than in previous years. This will also allow for a more flexible approach to Climate Change Planning where policies can be amended in light of evidence provided through annual progress checks. This promotes ongoing consideration of activity as it unfolds and reduces the need for intense scrutiny at proposal stage. This year we will explicitly link the process

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for producing the monitoring report with the process for updating the Climate Change Plan, ensuring that the update builds on what we are learning works on the ground.

You also ask about the wider process for updating the Plan, and the involvement of stakeholders in that process. As you know, we have already begun engaging with the public, businesses and public sector through the Big Climate Conversation. The Big Climate Conversation includes workshops, meetings, business summits and a written consultation, all of which will be considered together as a crucial part of the evidence base for the update to the Plan. Other sources of evidence will include (but not be limited to) the recent advice and forthcoming progress report from the UK Committee on Climate Change, the Climate Change Plan monitoring report, and your Committee's Stage 1 Bill reports.

Regarding the timing of the next full Climate Change Plan, if agreed by Parliament at Stage 3, section 19 of the Bill will require that this is delivered within 5 years of it coming into force. As set out in my letter to the Committee of 15 May, this would provide a limited degree of flexibility to take account of other considerations such as the Paris Agreement stock-take timetables. If the Bill achieves commencement by the end of 2019, then I anticipate the next full Plan will be required by the end of 2024 at the latest. This would align with the Committee's proposals as set out in its Stage 1 Report.

Yours,



Roseanna Cunningham

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