

Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee

Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill

SUBMISSION FROM - Euan Leitch - BEFS

Climate change is demonstrably leading to progressive and cumulative negative impacts on Scotland's historic/built environment and historic landscapes, which the Scottish Parliament, and Scottish Ministers, have recognised as important cultural and economic resources.

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and its collaborators have made a promising start on quantifying such impacts in respect of the properties HES manages on behalf of Ministers, and in exploring technical approaches to many of the changes posed by climate change. However, so far there has been little collaborative effort to understand and measure impacts across the wider historic environment, or to explore the costs of adaptation and mitigation for the vast majority of heritage assets which remain in private ownership. The assets can be historic commercial and residential buildings, sites and monuments; these heritage buildings add interest, value and appeal to the places in which we live, grow, study and work. While there is agreement within the sector that these impacts in relation to climate change exist and are real, progress in approaching any form of all-Scotland assessment has been disappointingly slow to date. BEFS recommends that HES be asked to offer evidence, especially on this wider perspective.

BEFS encourages Scottish Ministers to be ambitious, bearing in mind that even achieving zero emissions will not undo the damage already done to our climatic and environmental systems, but will merely slow the rate of change in the hope that nature can establish a new equilibrium in the longer term. BEFS supports the adoption of the most urgent action in respect of emissions targets, and would much prefer to see the strongest possible political statement on this, in the form of a commitment to work towards zero net emissions by 2050.

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