

Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd, yr Amgylchedd a Seilwaith /
Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee
Blaenoriaethau ar gyfer y Chweched Senedd / Priorities for the Sixth Senedd
PR99
Ymateb gan Marcus Bailie / Evidence from Marcus Bailie

Below are my comments on the 30th July letter from Julie James, Climate Minister, and Lee Waters, Deputy Minister to Llyr Gruffydd, Chair, Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee.

1. My comments are set in the light of the Third UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA3) from the Committee on Climate Change published 2021.
<https://www.ukclimaterisk.org/independent-assessment-ccra3/national-summaries/>
This makes it clear that the Welsh Government is not doing enough to tackle Climate Change:

(CCRA3) assesses 61 risks and opportunities from climate change to Wales, including to business, infrastructure, housing, the natural environment, our health and risks from the impacts of climate change internationally.

Of these 61 risks and opportunities, more action is needed in Wales now to address 32 of them, with sustaining current action only deemed appropriate in five cases.

In total, 26 risks from climate change in Wales have increased in urgency score since the previous CCRA five years ago.

2. My comments are also made in the light of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) 2019 Gap Report.
<https://www.unep.org/resources/emissions-gap-report-2019>

This states that the average reduction in global greenhouse gas emissions needs to fall by over 7% per year, with rich countries (such as Wales and the UK) being considerably more ambitious.

3. Finally, the 2021 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report (IPCC AR6) warned of a Code Red for humanity.
<https://www.ipcc.ch/assessment-report/ar6/>
4. Under the heading **Net Zero** the letter from the Minister and Deputy Minister makes a number of statements about the average annual reduction in greenhouse emissions:
 - Wales has recently committed to net-zero by 2050
 - Carbon Budget 1 was 2016- 2015 and required an average reduction of 27%.
 - Carbon Budget 2 is 2021-2025 is for an average 37% reduction.

- The 2030 decadal target is for 63% reduction against the baseline.
5. Firstly, I note the typo in the second of these statements. Carbon Budget 1 was, of course, 2016- **2020**. Typos can be forgiven but it is disturbing that I pointed this particular typo out to a previous civil servant during a zoom meeting and in an email early this year.
 6. More substantively, since all of the percentage reductions quoted are based on the 1990 baseline, 27% reduction by 2020 is a little under 1% on average per year.

A further reduction to 37% between 2021 and 2025 (10 percentage points over 5 years) is still only, on average, a 2% reduction per year.

But 2% is still massively below the reductions identified by the UN Environment Programme Gap Report. This says that a GLOBAL average reduction of over 7% will be required to keep global warming to below 1.5 degrees centigrade, with rich countries such as Wales and the UK being considerably more ambitious.

Assuming that Wales were to meet this 2025 target, the reduction to 63% by 2030 would mean an average annual reduction in Greenhouse gas emissions of approximately 5% during the years 2026–30. This would be closer to the UNEP global average but still well short of it, and certainly not considerably more ambitious than it. I note that the period 2026–30 is wholly outside the term of the current Welsh Government.

7. In summary, I believe that successive Welsh Governments have failed to grasp the urgency of the climate and ecological crises we now face, and the current Government appears to be no different. The previous civil servant that I referred to did state in an email that the Government policy was “related to the ability of Wales and the wider UK to quickly and effectively decarbonise our entire way of life’. During a subsequent meeting he used the phrase ‘we do not want to crash the economy’. I suspect what he meant was that they do not want to break the bad news to the people of Wales about the scale of change that we must all face, starting now. The IPCC and the UNEP understand this urgency very well but are struggling to get nation states to act accordingly.
8. Over the next 12 – 18 months, therefore, the Welsh Government needs to agree how it is going to convey to the people of Wales what actually needs to happen during their term in office, engage with the people of Wales, and then implement it. There are many individuals and organisations across Wales prepared to help with this process.

“If liberty means anything at all it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear.”

George Orwell

Governments not only have the right to tell people what they do not want to hear, they have a duty to do so!