

13/05/19

Dear Senedd Petitions,

cc: Ken Skates AC/AM, Minister for Economy and Transport

I am writing in response to a letter I have received from the Minister for Economy and Transport, regarding the petition calling for the Welsh Government to encourage all supermarkets and retailers to have doors on all their fridges and freezers, and so reduce our national carbon footprint, electricity consumption and pave a way for a greener Wales. I have been informed this will be debated on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2019, and I have been given the opportunity to respond to the correspondence I have received, which I would like to do.

It is encouraging to hear that decarbonisation is a priority area in the 'Prosperity for All' plan within Wales, and I am glad to hear that "there is existing legislation to encourage the food retail sector to measure, report and take action on its energy and climate impacts". The Minister for Economy and Transport also mentioned that larger businesses are subject to mandatory reporting covering electricity, gas and transport fuel use and the associated greenhouse gas emissions. However, I would like to challenge the Welsh Government as to how they are keeping retailers (particularly food retailers) accountable to the amount of energy consumed and wasted?

The Minister for Economy and Transport kindly explained that the UK Government has set up a Climate Change Levy and Climate Change Agreements. The agreements however "are opt-in schemes" which would mean businesses do not have to participate and comply. I would like to again challenge the Welsh Government as to how they are keeping businesses accountable to their effect on Climate Change, if a lot of the legislation is voluntary or simply a reporting of numbers?

The minister again comments that the "Welsh Government supports the Courtauld Commitment 2025, a voluntary, pre-competitive initiative across the food and drink supply chain." However, again this is a voluntary scheme with little accountability. I challenge the Welsh Government again as to how they will keep businesses accountable to their effect on Climate Change?

Quite recently, you will be aware that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has said that within 12 years a rise of 1.5 degrees Celsius could have catastrophic and irreversible effects on our planet, which means we can no longer be casual or slow in our response to fighting climate change, rather we must be proactive, urgent and press on to tackle climate change head on. Time is running out. What will the Welsh Government do in regards to placing doors on fridges and freezers inside all supermarkets and retails across Wales and so help slow down and eventually prevent catastrophic effects of climate change?

Placing doors on fridges and freezers is a simple way of saving a lot of energy, since as previously stated in the petition, just one "typical 2.5 metre mineral fridge with doors will typically save 10,000kWh per year compared to fridges without doors... This is the equivalent of 7 tonnes of carbon dioxide greenhouse gas and would be enough to power at least two homes of electricity for one year!" This is an opportunity for the Welsh Government to take action against climate change.

To conclude:

- I petition the Welsh Government to think carefully how they are **urgently** addressing the issues of climate change.

- I petition the Welsh Government to think through how they will keep food retailers **accountable** to their energy usage rather than simply reporting figures.
- I urge the Welsh Government to consider encouraging all supermarkets and retailers to have doors on all their fridges and freezers and petition the UK Government for legislation so that we can **reduce** our national carbon footprint, electricity consumption and pave a way for a **greener** Wales.

I agree that “we need individuals, communities and businesses to change the way they live and operate”, but I also believe the Welsh Government has a role and responsibility to set an example for others, take this opportunity to take a stand against climate change and take action that will pave a way for a greener Wales and a greener world.

Thank you for taking the time to debate this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Burton