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PARLIAMENTARY BRIEFING

Energy, Economy and Tourism Committee briefing

June 2011

WWF Scotland would like to take the opportunity to brief new members ahead of the new session on some key issues for WWF. We look forward to engaging with new Committee members and staff over the course of the next Parliament.

Climate Change

Scotland has been hailed across the world for its ambitious climate change plans. Having passed the Climate Change Act in 2009, we now call on the Parliamentary committees to hold the Government to account on its implementation, to facilitate the move towards a low carbon economy. Annual emissions reductions targets have to be met through the implementation of the Government's Report on Proposals and Policies (RPP). The RPP for 2010 - 2022 shows that emissions reductions from current policies only add up to meet 3 out of the next 12 annual targets (2013, 2019 and 2020). More policy effort – particularly in transport and housing - must be achieved in order to give the confidence that these targets will be met. WWF asks that EET, alongside the ICI and the RACCE Committees, holds the Government to account on the full implementation of the RPP along with a sufficient level of budgetary funding to ensure that all the proposals contained in the document are translated into policies.

Sustainable Development

The purpose of our economic framework should be to support the delivery of sustainable development – reducing our impact, tackling inequalities and improving wellbeing. EET's legacy paper proposed looking at sustainable economic development in the new session. With the loss of this independent scrutiny body, WWF is keen to ensure that there is some capacity with Parliamentary committees to scrutinise the Government's progress on aligning policy with Scotland's environmental, social and economic needs, now and in the future. WWF therefore asks the EET Committee to ensure that sufficient scrutiny is given to Ministers' embedding sustainable development into the architecture of Government and make real progress on sustainable development.

Beyond GDP

Measuring Scotland's economic progress needs to go 'beyond GDP' to measure what matters, placing greater emphasis on wellbeing. Growth per se, as measured by GDP alone, can undermine progress towards environmental or social goals that in turn can impact on our economic wellbeing. WWF therefore asks the Committee to consider alternative ways



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to measure progress which place greater emphasis on wellbeing and sustainability, and influence any review of the National Performance Framework to ensure such measures are adequately reflected. In addition it is important to and to monitor the impact of our budgetary spend decisions – particularly in relation to cutting our climate emissions.

The Government's 2010 Low Carbon Economic Strategy provides a welcome framework for considering the linkages and opportunities between tackling climate change and the economy, but does not go far enough. We hope that the Committee will have the capacity to ensure 'low carbon' is at the core of Scotland's overall economic strategy, with a specific objective of supporting delivery of the Climate Change Act.

Energy

The Government's delivery of its renewable electricity targets will be a key theme for the Committee in the new session, particularly as in their Low-Carbon Economy Strategy, the Government has committed to a 'largely-decarbonised' power sector by 2030. Research by WWF, RSPB and FOES, the 'Power of Scotland Secured' concludes that renewables can comfortably provide 100% of our annual electricity demand by 2020, increasing up to 185% by 2030. The report shows that by 2030 Scotland could phase out all conventional thermal power, from coal, gas and nuclear, not only keep the lights on but become a major export of green power. In their 2010 Energy Efficiency Action Plan, the Government committed to reducing energy use by 12% by 2020, and we encourage the Committee to monitor progress towards this target and assess whether or not the action plan is fit to deliver this target.

EET's legacy paper noted a need to look at heating technologies and the progress on the Government's target to achieve 11% of heating from renewable sources by 2020. Recent work by both the EST Scotland and Scottish Renewables suggest that growth in the sector means this is too modest and is no longer driving this transformation. WWF proposes that the Committee looks at conducting an enquiry in the future role of renewable heat and the appropriate level of ambition for a renewable heat target.

WWF also calls on EET to work closely with the ICI Committee on transport and housing policy, two major components of our energy demand.

Energy Efficiency in homes

Scotland's homes account for about a quarter of our greenhouse gas emissions and a third of all households are in fuel poverty. It is essential the Government maximises the potential in home retrofit to ensure we meet climate change and fuel poverty targets, while at the same time building a low carbon economy. The RPP sets out an intention to deliver a 36% cut in emissions from housing, but we believe the sector has the potential to contribute much more.

WWF has always promoted a balanced package of support, finance, regulatory and fiscal measures to increase the take-up of energy efficiency measures in homes. The Scottish Government's 2009 consultation *Conserve and Save* noted that despite the advantages associated with energy efficiency improvements a *'step-change is required to achieve significant reductions in energy demand'*. WWF Scotland calls on the Committee to scrutinise the Scottish Government's delivery of this 'step change' and monitor its compliance with statutory climate and fuel poverty duties.

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