



BUILDING A POSITIVE VISION OF A LOW CARBON SCOTLAND

WWF Scotland

WWF SCOTLAND MANIFESTO FOR THE 2015 UK GENERAL ELECTION

The 2015 UK General Election, in advance of the 2016 Scottish Parliament election, presents the opportunity for all parties in Scotland to reaffirm their environmental commitments and to set out new, ambitious, policies to meet the environmental challenges we face as a society – from climate change, to energy insecurity and our reliance on fossil fuels, to the declining health of our seas. These elections are also an opportunity for politicians to demonstrate how their environmental policies will help make Scotland a better place for people to live – from growth and jobs in a flourishing low-carbon economy, to cleaner, lower-cost renewable energy, and healthy seas that support sustainable industries and stimulate our enjoyment of the natural world.

While WWF Scotland's manifesto for 2016 will focus on the powers available to the Scottish Government, this manifesto for 2015 sets out a number of proposals for Scottish candidates standing for election in the UK Parliament in 2015. Here we outline some of the policies that we hope Scotland's political parties will support, in order to ensure Scotland's fair contribution to a better environmental future.

Policies to meet the world's climate challenge

It is not too late to avert the worst impacts of dangerous climate change, if we act now. Against a background of massive public and cross-party support, the UK Parliament was the first in the world to pass a Climate Change Act, with the world-leading Climate Change (Scotland) Act following just a year later. We now have a critical role to play in delivering meaningful agreements on climate action at home, in Europe, and globally.

The UK, and particularly Scotland, is at the forefront of the development of new low-carbon technologies like offshore wind, wave and tidal power, carbon capture and storage and electric vehicles. Developing leadership in these areas could open the way for significant economic growth across the UK, while also accelerating cost reductions in these technologies for all to benefit.

Scotland's political parties must reaffirm their commitment to ambitious greenhouse gas emission reductions, and the growth of a low-carbon economy by:

- unequivocally **committing to the UK greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets set out in the Committee on Climate Change's (CCC) carbon budgets;**
- taking **firm, positive action to decarbonise the economy** including, in 2016, setting the UK Fifth Carbon Budget in line with CCC advice and formally including the UK's share of international aviation and shipping emissions in carbon budgets;
- setting out an **ambitious plan to roll out energy efficiency** as a major national infrastructure project, ensuring that the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) delivers for Scotland's particular type of housing stock, and that a fair proportion of ECO is spent in Scotland.
- **championing the UK's renewable energy industry and accelerating the reduction in the costs of these technologies** by resolving the uncertainties around Electricity Market Reform to give the industry confidence to invest in the short to medium term and by creating the conditions for long-term, sustainable investment in a supply chain for the offshore wind sector; setting a carbon intensity target for the electricity sector in 2030 of 50-100g CO₂/kWh to create the conditions for long-term, sustainable investment in a renewable supply chain, encouraging community ownership of renewable energy including wind and solar farms and domestic micro-generation;
- ensuring **an affordable grid connection for Scottish islands**, which could produce several hundreds of MW of onshore wind generation at costs significantly cheaper than offshore wind, and provide sites for demonstration of wave and tidal arrays at reasonable connection cost; and
- advocating **a green taxation shift** in the post-referendum devolution settlement, to stimulate more environmentally beneficial behaviour, reduce pollution, and create a more economically efficient way of raising necessary tax revenues. This must include an **air passenger duty** that reflects the environmental impact of aviation.
- at an international level, working to secure **ambitious global deals on both the post-2015 Millennium Development Goals and a fair, equitable global climate deal at the UN FCCC Paris Summit in 2015.**

Policies to build a 21st century low-carbon economy

The next UK Parliament must help create the architecture that will support the building blocks of a 21st century UK economy. These building blocks must ensure decision-making across government that supports the transformation of the economy to one that supports our long-term ambitions on climate change and sustainable development. The building of a strong, low-carbon economy will be felt in Scotland, with green jobs, opportunities for innovation, and a more coherent framework for the most environmentally-friendly decision-making.

Scotland's political parties must support the building blocks of a 21st century UK low-carbon economy by:

- developing a **coherent, national plan for a new economy**, setting out clear long-term targets and measures to ensure that government and the public and private sectors understand and account for their use of and impacts on our climate and natural environment;
- **strengthening the Green Investment Bank**, headquartered in Edinburgh, including by giving it full borrowing powers, so that it can provide strong support to the growth of the businesses and industries that will power the new economy;
- creating a **UK Office of Environmental Responsibility (OER)**, at arm's length from government, with a duty to provide impartial advice to UK Ministers on the long-term implications of their decisions for the environment, both nationally and internationally;
- placing a **duty on all UK Government departments**, to be overseen by the OER, when exercising their powers to do so in pursuance of sustainable development; and
- continuing to **support and provide long-term funding for the Natural Capital Committee**, whose expertise will be critical to policy-making that maintains and enhances natural capital.

Policies for healthy, productive and well managed UK seas

The UK and Scotland have long histories as maritime nations. In 2009 and 2010, responding to massive public and cross party support, both UK and Scottish Parliaments passed Marine Acts to protect the UK's marine wildlife and habitats and ensure a well-managed marine environment. In 2014, the new EU Common Fisheries Policy also came into force, with a commitment to end discards and bring about a new way of managing our fisheries to benefit the environment for the longer term.

The next UK Parliament needs to recognise the importance of our marine environment for our environment, our fishing communities and our long-term wellbeing, ensuring the proper implementation of the EU's Common Fisheries Policy, and stopping illegal fishing that has such negative environmental, social and economic impacts, particularly in developing countries.

Scotland's political parties must support better management of our seas and its resources by:

- **implementing the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy** and, alongside the industry and stakeholders, developing a vision for thriving UK fishing businesses, communities and fish stocks. This should outline clear timelines for the achievement of economically, socially and environmentally sustainable fisheries with collaborative governance at the heart of the process; and
- implementing and **enforcing the EU regulation on illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing** by ensuring we block entry of illegally caught fish into the UK and export the practice of sustainable fisheries management across the world.

A sustainable future for the world's forests and wildlife

Many iconic wildlife species face an uncertain future, while the world's great forests – irreplaceable reservoirs of biodiversity and regulators of our global climate – are disappearing at an alarming rate. The UK has a strong record of leadership on international action for wildlife and habitats, and the next Government must build on this by:

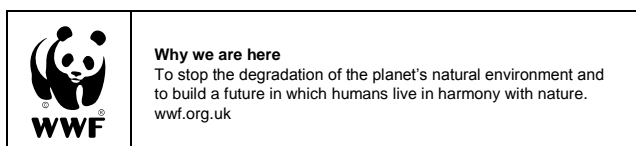
- Working with other EU member states to **close the loopholes in the Timber Regulation** when it is reviewed in 2016 so that it covers all timber and timber products;
- Introducing its own **Bill to ensure that all timber sold in the UK is both legally felled and sustainably grown**, thereby making the UK an international exemplar in protecting the world's forests;
- Maintaining **international leadership in action against wildlife crime and the illegal wildlife trade**;
- and matching its strong record on international wildlife crime with firm action at home through a **commitment to long-term funding for the National Wildlife Crime Unit**, based in Scotland.

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