



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

# Achieving Ireland's Climate Ambitions: Climate Action Bill 2020

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15<sup>th</sup> October 2020

# Policy Context



- Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015
- Report of the Citizens' Assembly on 'How the State Can Make Ireland a Leader in Tackling Climate Change'
- Oireachtas Joint Committee on Climate Action Report 2019
- 2019 Climate Action Plan
- Climate and Biodiversity Emergency declared in 2019
- European Green Deal – includes EU Climate Law with 2050 climate neutral objective
- Programme for Government



# Programme for Government



- An average 7% per annum reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions from 2021 to 2030 (a 51% reduction over the decade)
- Climate Action Plan 2019 delivers an average 3.5% per annum over the decade
- Achieving net zero emissions by 2050
- The 2050 target will be set in law by the Climate Action Bill
- The Bill will define how five-year carbon budgets are set



# Overarching Objective of the Bill



- The Bill will facilitate a new direction and transformative change required to provide Ireland with opportunities to reimagine our economy and society
- Protect our environment and provide a clear long-term direction
- Enhance the existing climate governance framework to ensure it is significantly strengthened to deliver over time meaningful climate action to realise our national, EU and international obligations



# Key Elements in the Bill



- National 2050 Climate Objective
- Climate Action Plans and Strategies
- Carbon Budgets
- Changes to the role and composition of the Climate Change Advisory Council
- Stronger Oireachtas Oversight of Climate Policy





# National 2050 Climate Objective



- The Bill puts into law a national 2050 climate objective for the State to pursue the transition to a climate resilient and climate neutral economy by 2050
- A ‘climate neutral economy’ means a sustainable economy, where greenhouse gas emissions are balanced, or exceeded, by the removal of greenhouse gases



# Climate Action Plans and Strategies



- To enable the State to pursue the 2050 objective, the Bill provides for the making of new plans and strategies
- The National Mitigation Plan will be replaced by the preparation of a series of annually updated Climate Action Plans, and a series of National Long-Term Climate Action Strategies
- Starting in 2021, the Climate Action Plan will be updated annually, and will provide a roadmap of actions, including sectoral actions aligned to the period of the approved carbon budgets
- The 2021 Plan will set out how we will achieve 7% emission reduction per annum over the decade to 2030, allowing for the fact that it will not yet be possible to identify all the emerging technologies, changing scientific consensus or policies to meet the full ambition, as recognised in the Programme for Government
- The National Long-term Climate Action Strategy will be prepared every 10 years, with an option to update it every 5 years if necessary, and will specify the manner in which it proposed to achieve the 2050 objective, including an assessment of potential opportunities in relevant sectors
- All Local Authorities will be required to prepare a Local Authority Climate Action Plan, covering both climate mitigation and climate adaptation



# Carbon Budgets



- Carbon budgets will be proposed by the Climate Change Advisory Council, finalised by the Minister, and approved by Government
- Each budget will set out the total amount of greenhouse gases allowed in the State within a period of five years
- The budgets will include all greenhouse gases and cover all sectors of the economy
- Carbon budgets will be made for three sequential, five-year, budget periods, the grouping of the three being called the 'carbon budget programme'
- Each five-year budget will include 'sectoral decarbonisation target ranges' for each sector





# Climate Change Advisory Council



- The Climate Change Advisory Council will have a new function to propose carbon budgets
- The future composition of the Council will also change
- It will have three ex officio members - the Director General of the EPA; the Director of Teagasc; and the Director of Met Éireann
- Future appointments to the Council will be made having regard to the range of qualifications, experience and competence set out in the Bill; and to ensure gender balance



# Stronger Oireachtas Oversight of Climate Policy



- The Oireachtas will have a new role on the development and adoption of carbon budgets, and oversight of the Government's climate performance, including against carbon budgets and sectoral decarbonisation target ranges
- All relevant Ministers will be required to give account annually to a Joint Oireachtas Committee, and the reporting will be informed by the Climate Change Advisory Council's annual review report; the Environmental Protection Agency's annual GHG emissions inventories and projections reports; and progress reports on the Climate Action Plan
- Following Ministers reporting, the Committee may make a series of recommendations, which will have to be responded to in writing by the relevant Minister within three months



# Next Steps



- Pre-legislative Scrutiny of the Bill in October
- Final text of the Bill will be presented to Government for approval
- Progress in the Houses as soon as possible thereafter
- Preparation of National Long-term Climate Action Strategy
- Preparation of Climate Action Plan 2021
- Finalisation of carbon budgets

