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Minister Darragh O'Brien
Department of Climate, Environment & Energy
Tom Johnson House,
Haddington Road,
Dublin 2
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Email: Minister.O'Brien@decc.gov.ie

(Please note that this letter will only be sent electronically)

28th January 2025

Dear Minister O'Brien

Firstly, on behalf of the Climate Change Advisory Council, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Minister for Climate, Environment and Energy and Minister for Transport. The next five years will be a critical time for playing our part in addressing the climate emergency and ensuring that Ireland is resilient to the ever-increasing impacts of climate change and your Department will play a crucial role in both coordinating and driving the change required.

The Council would like to highlight the most important and urgent climate actions that must be addressed. Ensuring these actions are taken in a timely manner will demonstrate the necessary leadership and maximise the potential for Ireland to deliver on its domestic and EU legal obligations, thus minimising significant compliance costs and fines, whilst playing Ireland's part in helping to reduce the manifold risks to current and future generations.

1. Phase out of fossil fuels

It is urgent to end Ireland's reliance on harmful, expensive and unsustainable fossil fuels. This is a crucial and urgent transformational action for Ireland and must be seen as a priority across all sectors. To this end we need to phase out

fossil fuel subsidies and plan to make significant investments in solutions that reduce and remove our reliance on fossil fuels.

2. Ramping up our own sustainable energy

It is urgent to implement the strategy for the delivery of a reliable, resilient, decarbonised electricity system that also addresses the implications for decarbonising heating and transport. As part of this, the legal mandate for all public bodies and agencies must be updated to have regard to the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, particularly those operating in the energy sphere, such as the CRU, EirGrid, ESB Networks and Gas Networks Ireland.

3. Implement the National Mobility Strategy

Transport is Ireland's greatest source of energy demand and an enhanced focus on active and public transport is required. Council considers it vital that a comprehensive strategy to make our transport system more efficient and to alleviate the impacts of car-dependency and congestion on the economy is implemented early in 2025. Where journeys are unavoidable greater electrification, particularly of private passenger vehicles, has significant potential to contribute to achieving our legal goals.

4. EU legislation and targets

Ireland missed the July 2024 deadline for transposition of a number of requirements under RED III relating to permitting for renewables. These must be transposed as soon as possible and align with provisions in the Planning and Development Act 2024. Meeting Ireland's targets to reduce final energy consumption under the Energy Efficiency Directive will require full implementation of all transport and heating policy measures.

5. 2040 Target

The EU will begin work in earnest during 2025 on its targets for 2040 in the context of the European Climate Law and preparations for COP30 in Brazil. Council published its proposal on carbon budgets for the periods 2035-2040 and 2036-2040 in December. Government will need to urgently consider and work towards the adoption of a final

carbon budget for the period 2031-2035 within the first three months of its term which it should use to inform its position on the 2040 targets. The Council is happy to assist in any way to this end.

The above recommendations as well as additional sector specific aspects are set out in the Council's annual review, and the Council would be pleased to elaborate on any of these. Further, the Council would like to invite you to its first in-person meeting of 2025 which will take place in Dublin on April 10th. We look forward to establishing and maintaining a constructive and positive working relationship with you over the coming years.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marie C. Donnelly". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'y'.

Marie C. Donnelly

Chairperson

Climate Change Advisory Council