



The time to act is now – says the Climate Change Advisory Council

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The Climate Change Advisory Council has said that while the fall in emissions last year has brought Ireland closer to achieving its first carbon budget, the lack of significant progress makes it unlikely that Ireland will meet its second carbon budget in the period 2026 – 2030.

The Council launched the final chapter of its Annual Review today which assesses both Ireland's current and projected emissions and provides urgent cross sectoral recommendations which need to be implemented now.

The Council calls for the end of 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.

The Council wants Government to stop subsidising fossil fuel usage and increase funding to provide financial supports that protect the most vulnerable people and communities, which would accelerate the rapid uptake of low-carbon technologies.

To enable the transition, the revised National Planning Framework must be implemented swiftly and in full. The current draft should be further strengthened to support the expansion of wind and solar roll-out to meet Ireland's growing demand for electricity. Also new housing and developments must be located and supported by public transport services in a way that reduces emissions.

The Council also said that the Government needs to complete the Land Use Review and set out a detailed implementation plan to enable the necessary reduction in agriculture emissions and deliver the diverse range of bioeconomy and ecosystem services required to maintain a sustainable, resilient and biodiversity rich economy.

Commenting, Marie Donnelly, Chair of the Climate Change Advisory Council said, "While progress has been made in reducing our emissions, it is not enough to meet our national and EU climate targets. Without immediate and decisive action, the cost of failing to meet EU targets could exceed €8 billion for the period up to 2030.

"However, there is an opportunity to build on the good work that has been done, with targeted supports in place for households and businesses, which will make heat pumps and EVs more accessible, and further delivering on the retrofit of our housing stock, reducing our reliance on imported and expensive fossil fuels.

"This is dependent on the delivery of an effective and fit for purpose planning system as a key Government priority. This must support the generation of our own onshore

wind and solar electricity and ensure that housing developments are located close to services and public transport, while bringing vacant and derelict housing back into use.

Concluding, Marie Donnelly added, “We have the opportunity, now, to transform our society to a modern, climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy or else pay the price of not meeting our commitments which will take crucial funds away from essential services. It is better to make the investments now for households, communities and businesses, rather than paying a large fine in a few years.”

ENDS

If you have any questions or are seeking further comment, please do not hesitate to contact:

Shane Finnegan (shane@aikenpr.com or 00447764534565) or Seamus Donnelly (seamus@aikenpr.com or 00447729556480)

NOTES

Key Observations

- Ireland’s emissions fell overall in 2023, and across almost all sectors, bringing it closer to achieving the carbon budget 2021–2025 targets, but not to the extent necessary to significantly increase the likelihood of meeting the targets for carbon budget 2026–2030.
- Emissions projections published by the Environmental Protection Agency outline the difficulties that Ireland is likely to face in meeting national and EU emissions objectives. The costs of failing to meet EU objectives are significant and are projected to exceed €8 billion in certain scenarios. There is also growing concern about the availability of credits required to demonstrate compliance given that other Member States are also having difficulties meeting their targets.
- The Council welcomes the EU Regulation on nature restoration that came into effect on 18 August 2024 and recognises that reaching the mandated restoration targets within a well-designed and well-implemented National Restoration Plan for nature will play a key role in achieving climate and biodiversity objectives by 2050.