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Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd, Ynni a Materion Gwledig
Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-869
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/05322/19

David John Rowlands AM
Chair, Petitions Committee

SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

19 February 2019

Dear David

Thank you for your letter of 8 February regarding Petition P-05-869 Declare a climate emergency. I have considered the issues raised by the petition and offer the following observations.

The Environment (Wales) Act was passed less than three years ago and the target to reduce emissions by at least 80% in 2050 reflects the National Assembly's ambition for Wales. In December the National Assembly passed the Climate Change (Wales) Regulations, which included interim targets for 2020, 2030 and 2040 and also set our first two carbon budgets to 2025. The targets and budgets were set in accordance with advice received from our statutory advisory body, the Committee on Climate Change (CCC).

The CCC concluded the circumstances in Wales make achieving an 80% reduction here more challenging than the equivalent reduction for the UK as a whole. This is due to Wales having a greater share of 'hard to reduce' emissions, for example in agriculture and industry. Although taking action on climate change will demonstrate global responsibility by lessening the effects of climate change around the world, we need to be careful and minimise potential carbon leakage in our low carbon transition, whereby emissions simply move to another country.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Next month we will publish a Plan setting out how Wales will meet its first carbon budget. This will include actions relating to engaging more people in Wales with tackling greenhouse gas emissions. All Welsh Government policies are already subject to a range of impact assessments during development. Along with statutory biodiversity and Strategic Environmental Assessments where relevant, we have introduced a climate change impact assessment to ensure we are considering the effect of our policies on emissions and our ability to adapt to changing weather patterns.

Citizens and other stakeholders have had the opportunity to influence the Regulations and the Plan. In 2017 the CCC ran two public calls for evidence, which provided the opportunity to influence their advice regarding the carbon accounting framework as well as the level of our first two carbon budgets and the interim targets. The Welsh Government supported these calls for evidence and undertook consultation events jointly with the CCC in north and south Wales. We published the Cabinet's decision to accept the CCC advice in June 2018, several months before laying the draft Regulations in the National Assembly. In addition, we ran a twelve week consultation last year on potential actions to reduce emissions to 2030 and have used the responses to develop the report. There will be further opportunities for citizens to be involved as we develop climate change legislation and policy in future.

For any new target to be credible, it must be evidence-based. The current evidence we have from the CCC suggests the maximum feasible reduction for Wales by 2050 is 85%.¹ However, in light of the Paris Agreement and the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Special Report I have already asked the CCC to look again at our long-term target. Last year the CCC ran a public call for evidence to inform this advice and asked specifically how their advice should reflect the different circumstances in the four nations of the UK. I expect to receive the advice in May. We will consider this advice and its implications for our statutory framework, including the 2050 target.

On a point of detail, the petition claims Powys County Council has declared a climate emergency. I understand the meeting on 24 January amended the relevant motion to remove any reference to an emergency before it was passed.

A handwritten signature in blue ink. The word 'Regards' is written in a cursive style on the top line, and the name 'Lesley' is written below it, also in a cursive style. The signature is positioned to the left of the typed name and title.

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¹ [Building a low-carbon economy in Wales – Setting Welsh carbon targets](#) (Committee on Climate Change 2017) p.24