
Will Fianna Fáil support a "Citizens' Convention for a Post-Carbon Ireland"?

Micheál Martin <micheal@michealmartin.ie>

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To: Barry McMullin <barry.mcmullin@dcu.ie>

Dear Barry,

Many thanks for your email and your interest in our Party's policy for how to tackle Climate Change.

Fianna Fáil has a strong record on introducing progressive measures to tackle climate change – perhaps the single greatest threat to children and grandchildren's future. We are committed to ambitious greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets and a climate justice programme to meet our new commitments agreed at the Paris Conference on tackling climate change.

The COP21 agreement in Paris on more ambitious GHG reduction targets presents huge opportunities as well as challenges for Ireland and for the next government. I believe it is essential that, as a country, we live up to this agreement and meet our emissions reduction and renewables targets across all areas including electricity production, agriculture, home heating and transport. We also need to do more to ensure that Ireland meets its climate justice commitments; including making progressive contributions to the cost of adaptation, mitigation and emissions reduction measures in developing countries.

It is unfortunate that this government have been such laggards in introducing innovative schemes to achieve our GHG reduction and climate justice targets.

Although the latest emission figures are encouraging for some sectors, they show that much more needs to be done. While progress has been made by some areas – especially Electricity Production and Agriculture – to meet our 2020 emissions reduction targets; almost no progress has been made in other areas since 2011, notably Home Heating and Transport.

There is no policy in place for reducing home heating emissions and – despite paying lip service to renewable transport – the government has effectively given up on meeting our targets by 2020.

Fianna Fáil is fully committed to meeting our 2020 targets in these areas and has detailed policy plans for achieving this.

We also have to look at further afforestation and better wetland protection, both as a means of mitigating emissions as a means for protecting our natural heritage and biodiversity. Only 11 % of our land is forested compared to 33% across the EU and afforestation has a huge potential for helping us meet our emission targets. It is hopeful that forests planted since just 1990 already absorb a massive 18% of Irish agriculture's annual greenhouse gas emissions.

I believe your proposal for a Citizens' Convention for a Post-Carbon Ireland, has a great deal of merit and is one that we would certainly explore. Any further measures taken to decarbonise our economy will require greater 'buy-in' from all Citizens, and this is one way to achieve this.

I would like to thank you again for your interest in our environment policies for and hope we can be in touch again after the election.

Sincerely,

Micheál Martin