

Friends of the Earth highlight the Brexit effect on the environment



The Scottish Parliament will debate the potential impact of Brexit on the environment and climate change at Holyrood later today. Friends of the Earth Scotland highlight their fears ahead of the debate:

Dr Richard Dixon Director of Friends of the Earth Scotland said:

“The Scottish Government have already promised to keep up important environmental protections, but they face pressure at home from farming and fishing lobbies and from a UK government with a very different set of priorities on climate, nature and energy policy.

“The UK is currently supposed to contribute to meeting European climate, energy efficiency and renewable energy targets. After Brexit we will need to agree new climate targets with the United Nations. Scotland’s targets are already significantly more ambitious than the current overall UK targets but any agreement with the UN may be on the basis of those weaker UK targets, reducing the drive for a low-carbon economy.

“After Brexit, there will be no compulsion on the UK to set any targets for energy saving or green energy, which are both essential for meeting Scotland’s ambitious climate targets. The current UK Government’s energy priorities are nuclear power and fracking, and they have already reduced support for

renewable energy. There is a real danger that Scotland will toughen up its own climate target, to play its fair part in delivering the UN Paris Agreement, only to be held back by UK energy market rules rigged to support nuclear power.”

“There will likely be a huge drive within the UK Government to rip up laws which protect nature, prevent pollution and set standards for a clean environment. Most of EU environmental law is devolved to Holyrood so Scotland can decide to keep these protections in place but we will still feel the impact of deep cuts to budgets for managing the environment. As a society we lose the protection of being able to appeal to European courts if either the UK or Scottish governments are failing to protect the environment.

“We cannot allow any trade deals, either at a UK or Scottish level, to weaken any important environmental regulations or promote the import of environmentally destructive products.

We have witnessed the huge public backlash to the EU deals with Canada and USA which are driven by demands of big business and had threatened to remove valuable public safeguards mistakenly labelling them as ‘barriers to trade’ .”

You can see what is being discussed at Holyrood on a daily basis [here](#) on the Scottish Parliament website.