

Scottish Government's programme hailed as greenest ever

Environmental groups applauded the new Programme for Government announced in Holyrood yesterday, which contains a host of 'green' measures.

Friends of the Earth believe such steps will improve the lives of people in Scotland through cleaner air, reduced waste, investment in green energy and ensuring the transition to a low carbon economy is fair.

Key measures announced in the PFG:

- * phasing out diesel and petrol vehicles from 2032
- * tackling air pollution with 4 Low Emission Zones across Scotland by 2020
- * new Just Transition Commission to help Scotland move to a low-carbon economy fairly
- * new National Investment Bank to fund long term, patient projects
- * deposit return scheme for bottles and cans
- * decision on fracking in the coming weeks



First Minister Nicola Sturgeon MSP announces the Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2017-18 at the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh. 05 September 2017. Pic – Andrew Cowan/Scottish Parliament

Friends of the Earth Scotland Director Dr Richard Dixon commented : "This is the greenest programme for government in the history of the Scottish Parliament. The Scottish Government has put improving and protecting the environment at the heart of their legislative and policy programme. Promises

here will reduce climate change emissions, save people from air pollution and help Scotland become a leading example of a low carbon country. This package is a very significant step towards a fossil-free Scotland.

“The First Minister explicitly recognised our moral responsibility to act on climate change and stated her commitment to doing Scotland’s full share of global efforts to limit warming to 1.5c. The measures announced today mean the Scottish Government should find little difficulty in further increasing ambition in the new climate act.”

Willie Mackenzie, oceans expert at Greenpeace UK, said:

“Governments are waking up to the frightening scale of ocean plastic pollution and it’s brilliant to see Scotland leading the way in helping to tackle it. On Greenpeace’s recent research expedition around remote Scottish coastlines, plastic bottles and packaging were simply everywhere. A staggering 16 million plastic bottles end up in the environment every day in the UK and deposit return schemes are a great way to make sure more of them are collected and reused.

“Today’s announcement by the First Minister is a massive step in stopping plastic pollution, and the result of tireless campaigning by many groups and individuals. With businesses and an overwhelming majority of the public in favour of deposit schemes, the Scottish Government now has a mandate to implement as robust a system as possible to help reduce plastic pollution. Hopefully it won’t be too long before the rest of the UK follows suit.

“Alongside a deposit return scheme, major soft drinks companies like Coca-Cola – who backed deposit return schemes after being [exposed by Greenpeace for lobbying against them](#) – need to seriously rethink their business models. Creating over 100 billion single-use plastic bottles a year is the root of the problem. Drastically reducing their plastic footprint is the only solution. Throwaway plastic causes ocean pollution,

and the sooner companies face up to that, the quicker we'll stem the plastic tide."