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Dear Alex

Committee on Climate Change advice on the appropriateness of a Northern Ireland Climate Change Act

This letter is a response to your request for advice on whether Northern Ireland should enact climate change legislation, including legally binding emissions targets.

In assessing this issue, we have focused on the challenges and opportunities in each emitting sector, the extent to which these are addressed under current approaches, and levers for Northern Ireland to further encourage emissions reduction.

We conclude that there is a significant opportunity for emissions reduction in Northern Ireland. The aim should therefore be to reduce emissions, which will be of economic benefit in a world of tightening carbon constraints and rising carbon prices, and concerns over security of supply associated with imported fossil fuels.

Experience at the UK level and in Scotland suggests that legislation is useful in underpinning low carbon programmes, and providing certainty to business and policy-makers. Similar benefits could ensue if legislation were to be introduced in Northern Ireland.

If this is the preferred option, it would be important to focus legislation on emissions within Northern Ireland's control (i.e. the non-traded sector), rather than those sectors in the EU ETS, as such emissions account for a relatively large share of total emissions in Northern Ireland compared to elsewhere in the UK.

It is also important to allow for current uncertainties in the measurement of agriculture emissions, which again account for a relatively large share of total Northern Ireland emissions. This suggests that a flexible approach may be

appropriate, with targets to be finalised as uncertainties are resolved when the smart inventory is implemented in 2015.

Whether or not legislation is passed, it will be crucial to put in place a set of policies and incentives to drive emissions down. In particular, there is an important role for the public sector, which is responsible for a relatively high share of emissions, to provide leadership through improving energy efficiency and reducing transport emissions. More generally, policies should be focused at unlocking potential to reduce emissions from buildings, transport and agriculture, and supporting investment in renewable power generation.

The analysis underpinning these conclusions is set out in the report ['The appropriateness of a Northern Ireland Climate Change Act'](#)

I would be very happy to discuss further with you as required, and look forward to continuing to work with you

Yours ever,



Adair Turner
Chair, Committee on Climate Change