



Healthier and fairer communities for all

Friends of the Earth's Programme for a Government
that delivers faster and fairer climate action, 2025 - 2030

50 Friends of
the Earth
Celebrating 50 years



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Climate change is already driving increasingly extreme weather around the world from storms and floods to droughts and wildfires. **Time is running out to make sure Earth, our only home, is a place our children can live full lives and grow old safely.**

We believe in a cleaner, healthier, safer, future for everyone, here in Ireland and around the world. The same factors that are driving pollution are also undermining our health and wellbeing and impacting already vulnerable and marginalised communities the most.

That means Ireland must do its fair share to eliminate pollution fast enough to prevent complete climate chaos and fairly enough to leave no one behind. We've made a start but it's just that. The next Government and all the parties in the next Dáil must deliver faster and fairer climate action at home and champion it internationally.

We need to stop using fossil fuels - coal, peat, oil and gas - and overusing products and processes that depend on them and produce pollution, from plastic and fertilizer to petrol and diesel cars. That means transforming our energy, transport, building and food systems in the next decade, starting immediately.

The good news is we already have the solutions to do that in ways that reduce poverty and inequality, at home and abroad. The transition will be disruptive and inconvenient at times but it will actually improve our quality of life and safeguard our future. **The transition will also require significant upfront investment and that must be state-led.** The state must also proactively ensure that the costs and the benefits of the transition are fairly distributed. What we need now is the political will to lead the transition, and we know that political will is a renewable resource, if enough people demand it.

We are demanding that the next Government, and all the parties in the next Dáil, commit to:



1. Government leadership, action and accountability, nationally and internationally

The next Government must uphold and champion the 2021 climate law and the binding limits on pollution agreed on a cross-party basis by the Dáil, and also agreed with our EU partners. The state must lead the transformations required, it cannot be left to grants, taxes and individual behaviour change. Only elected politicians can ensure the transition is fair, creating quality jobs and decent living standards while ensuring the solutions are accessible and affordable for all. Internationally, the Government must champion climate action that is fast, fair and funded, to fulfil the Paris Agreement, including contributing Ireland's fair share financially.



2. Warm homes for all, with lower bills and no fossil fuels.

To make sure everyone is living in decent, energy-efficient homes, the next Government must make home energy upgrades more affordable & accessible for all, regardless of home ownership status or income level. It's time to ensure that no one has to live in cold, leaky accommodation or needs to buy a new fossil fuel boiler.



3. Clean, affordable renewable energy for people, not data centres and big tech

The next Government must break Ireland's dependence on dirty, expensive fossil fuels, often imported from rogue states, and make sure that the development of Ireland's abundant clean energy resources prioritises local communities, our collective power needs, and nature, rather than the demands of big business for ever more consumption.



4. Affordable, reliable, and accessible fossil-free transport

The next Government must make public transport, walking and cycling so easy, safe and cheap and make our electric car network is so reliable and affordable that by 2030 an end to the sale of new fossil fuel cars is an obvious and uncontroversial next step.



5. A fair deal for family farmers, to feed Ireland and restore nature

The next Government must ensure the state, supermarkets and food processors pay farmers enough to support less polluting forms of agriculture and land use that produce local food, clean water, and a countryside where family farms and nature thrive.



Key demand 1: Government leadership, action and accountability, nationally and internationally

The next Government must uphold and champion the 2021 climate law and the binding limits on pollution agreed on a cross-party basis by the Dáil, and also agreed with our EU partners. The state must lead the transformations required, it cannot be left to grants, taxes and individual behaviour change. Only elected politicians can ensure the transition is fair, creating quality jobs and decent living standards while ensuring the solutions are accessible and affordable for all.

A lack of state investment in clean energy supply, including grids, renewables and heat networks, is resulting in fossil fuel lock-in, driving up energy prices, damaging our security and hurting Ireland's households and economic competitiveness, as Mario Draghi's report on EU competitiveness highlights more broadly.

Internationally, the Government must champion climate action that is fast, fair and funded, to fulfil the Paris Agreement, including contributing Ireland's fair share financially.

We urge all parties and candidates to commit to:

- Affirm their absolute commitment to doing everything in their power to uphold the 2021 climate law and achieve the national carbon budgets, sectoral emissions ceilings and Ireland's EU obligations.
- Urgently introduce corrective measures under the 2021 Climate Act, i.e. new and additional actions, to reduce emissions in line with the binding limits on pollution to 2025 and 2030 agreed by the Dáil on a cross-party basis. The latest EPA figures project an overshoot of between 17 and 27 per cent on the first two carbon budgets.
- Fulfil the letter and the spirit of the 2021 climate law by ensuring Ministers take the oversight and accountability process in the Dáil seriously.
- Support the European Commission proposal for a 90% reduction in EU emissions by 2040 and adopt 2035 and 2040 national carbon budgets in line with that. The Climate Change Advisory Council is due to recommend pollution limits for those budget periods at the end of 2024 and the Government will propose 2035 and 2040 carbon

- budgets to the Dáil and Seanad by summer 2025.
- Revise the legal mandates for key state agencies and public bodies, such as Gas Networks Ireland, the CRU, Coillte, Teagasc and ESB, to require that they perform their functions in a manner consistent with Ireland's legally binding carbon budgets.
- Increase investment in state capacity and resources to deliver short-term and long-term climate action. Analyses across all sectors point to the severe impacts of the climate and biodiversity crises, as well as the urgent need for a range of new staff to respond to existing commitments. Relevant Departments and state agencies should
 - Agree the number and type of staff they will need to achieve Climate Action Plan targets, in particular new ecologists and EIA specialist positions.
 - Ensure appropriate mandates and adequate funding for state agencies such as the HEA and the providers of apprentice, training and third-level courses to ensure a pipeline of skilled workers for the societal project of just transition.
 - Based on this review of staffing needs, increase funding for relevant Departments and agencies and also resource a fast-track recruitment process for key state bodies that are on the critical path to delivering climate action commitments and protecting and restoring nature.
- Ensure adequate funding for civil society organizations, who have valuable expertise and invaluable roots in communities around Ireland. They can channel citizens' perspectives to the state if they have the resources to engage meaningfully in the state's consultation and dialogue processes. Together with their own expertise, research and advocacy this state support for active citizenship can help inform and shape more effective and equitable policies.
- A Just Transition Commission is due to be established before the election. The next Government must follow through on the commitment to put it on a statutory footing, and must resource it adequately so that it can carry out its agreed mandate to analyse, advise on and

Key demand 1: **Government leadership, action and accountability, nationally and internationally**



advocate for a transition that is inclusive, equitable and fair, as well as provide a space for high-level social dialogue between Government and key stakeholders.

- The Government must launch a sustained public information campaign on climate change of the scale delivered on road safety over the last four decades. With the aim of ensuring public understanding of the critical nature of the climate and nature emergencies, what the current impacts in are expected to be in Ireland and by when, including by region and sector, the resulting need to act fast to prevent worse impacts, and the multiple benefits that will flow from action (e.g. cleaner air and water, warmer homes with lower bills). In short the state must invest heavily in building public understanding of the risks of action and the benefits of action, and the scale and speed required.
- In parallel, the state's public engagement programme must be substantially upgraded and co-created with civil society and communities to provide meaningful public participation and deliberation that actually informs and influences the design and delivery of the policy and programmes to eliminate pollution.
- Support the recommendation of Coalition 2030 that the next Government should establish a Future Generations' Commissioner on a statutory footing, whose mandate would be to ensure that no actions today undermine the sustainable future of generations to come, and whose position outlives electoral cycles. This step should also be backed by the establishment of a dedicated Oireachtas Committee for the Future to carry out 'generational tests' on those decisions most likely to have long-term impact and adapt policies accordingly if such effect is

Key demand 1: **Government leadership, action and accountability, nationally and internationally**

deemed to be detrimental to future generations. The state should also join the Network of Institutions for Future Generations.

- Hold a referendum on the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as recommended by the Citizens' Assembly and the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Environment and Climate Action. In July 2022 Ireland voted for the resolution passed by the UN General Assembly that declared access to a "clean, healthy and sustainable environment" a human right.
- Support the recommendations of Dóchas related to Ireland's climate finance contributions to ensure climate action is fair, fast and funded:
 - Deliver on our commitment of €225m per annum of climate finance at a minimum and set a pathway to increase this allocation to Ireland's actual 'fair share' of €500m per year.
 - Ensure that Ireland's climate finance is new and additional to any future increases in ODA as per Ireland's obligations under UNFCCC, and that Ireland continues to deliver this in grants rather than loans.
 - Support the new Loss and Damage Fund with significant, new and innovative sources of finance.
- Continue to advocate for the EU to agree to a negotiating mandate and support the United Nations process for a Legally Binding Treaty for Businesses in relation to Human Rights, and ensure the treaty provides clear protection for the right to a safe, clean, healthy environment.
- Ensure effective and meaningful transposition of the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive that obligates companies to identify and address the risk and harms to human rights and the environment across their global value chain, and guarantee access to justice for victims of corporate harms.
- In light of the EU's withdrawal from the Energy Charter Treaty, as well as the Government's 2024 commitment to also withdraw, confirm that Ireland has ended its association with the Energy Charter Treaty. Reject the inclusion of Investor-State Dispute Settlements in new international agreements and support efforts to exclude fossil fuels from existing investment treaties.



Key demand 1: **Government leadership, action and accountability, nationally and internationally**

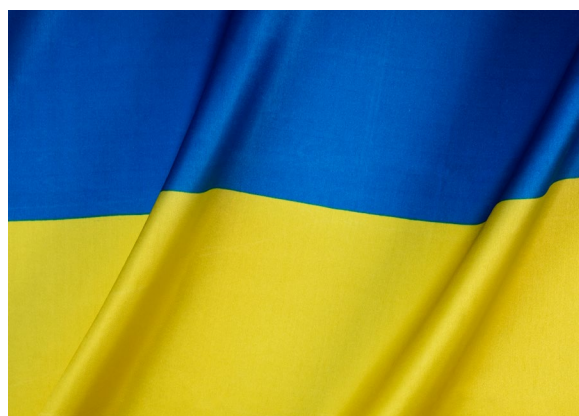
The Government must lead on Palestine and Ukraine

Friends of the Earth campaigns to bring about the system change needed for a just world where people and nature thrive. When we talk about addressing system change, we mean addressing the root causes of social and environmental injustice. Friends of the Earth shares the view that climate justice is not simply about reducing emissions, it is also racial justice, migrant justice and gender justice. It means acknowledging the undeniable and historical connection between the current economic system we live under and the manifestations of injustice globally. It means we are committed to showing solidarity and joining forces where possible when our causes intersect. It also means we are committed to peace, justice and human rights and we cannot be silent in the face of egregious breaches of international law. Therefore, we can neither ignore Ukraine nor Palestine and the need to end the war on Gaza and prevent further war crimes. We call on the Irish Government to:

- Continue to call out breaches of international law and disregard for human rights, including the prohibitions on directing attacks against civilians and civilian objects; indiscriminate attacks; disproportionate attacks and forced displacement.
- Continue to demand a peaceful resolution in Ukraine in response to the Russian invasion, support aid to frontline communities and demand that the international community uphold and defend the rights of the peoples to live in peace and freedom in Ukraine.
- Maintain strong support for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza.
- Reject the unconditional support for Israel's war on Palestinians among certain decision-makers in the EU and US.
- Hold Israel to account for its war crimes against the Palestinian people. Champion thorough and effective investigation by qualified and independent bodies including the International Criminal Court of all credible and official accusations of hate speech, forcible

displacement, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, genocide, and crimes against humanity.

- Enact the Occupied Territories Bill and Illegal Israeli Settlements Divestment Bill in Dáil Éireann, and ensure that Irish taxpayer money is not used for military procurement from Israeli defence contractors or investments by the Irish Strategic Investment Fund in companies complicit in the illegal Israeli settlements or the war on Gaza.
- Call for an end to the illegal post-1967 military occupation and settler colonization of Gaza, the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and the Golan Heights, and for coordinated international diplomacy to ensure this, seeking binding commitments to cease support for the occupation. This should ensure the full self-determination for Palestinians and diplomatic solutions based on UN resolutions, including the right to return, seeking justice between two equal parties.





Key demand 2: Warm homes for all, with lower bills and no fossil fuels

As part of tackling the housing emergency, the next Government must make home energy upgrades so affordable and accessible that nobody has to live in cold, leaky accommodation and nobody needs a new fossil fuel boiler.

That means combating high energy bills by prioritising significant energy efficiency measures for those most at-risk of energy poverty and breaking our dependence on fossil fuel home heating.

While Ireland has progressive commitments and has increased funding in support of the decarbonisation of heat, energy poverty has significantly increased in recent years while access to energy efficiency measures remains limited.

We are concerned that Ireland may end up with essentially a 2-tier energy and heating sector, whereby higher income households (and industry) are able to take progressive measures to reduce their reliance on expensive fossil fuels through investment in energy efficiency measures and solar PV, while lower income households and marginalised communities are left to struggle in older, inefficient buildings, continuing to spend on polluting, precarious and increasingly expensive oil and gas.



We urge all parties and candidates to commit to:

(i) State Leadership to Guarantee Warm Homes for All

Current government grants and schemes have helped many Irish households to retrofit their homes, however for other households retrofitting is still out of reach. Energy deprivation remains a crisis issue impacting the elderly, single parents, disabled people, renters and Travellers. A pro-active, state-led approach is needed from the new government to ensure every Irish household, and particularly those most at risk, can unlock the benefits of warmer homes and lower energy bills.

- Introduce minimum BERs in the private rental sector on a phased basis from 2025. In order to address the 'split incentive' challenge, also explore dedicated finance options and incentives. These must be introduced alongside protection for tenants against undue energy bill or rent hikes, or eviction on the grounds of energy efficiency improvements.
- Establish a Community Energy Advice Service in every county to give independent, tailored advice and support directly to households in order to improve their home energy efficiency, install renewable energy, and reduce their energy bills. This service should work with NGOs, community groups, and health professionals to target support at households that are most in-need.
- Support the accessibility of retrofits by expanding the Government's existing low-cost loan scheme, and for those on lower incomes introduce a zero-interest loan scheme for households and fully subsidise the cost of a BER assessment.
- Expand the Warmer Homes Scheme to include homes leased to HAP tenants for free energy upgrades, on the condition of a long-term lease (5+ years) being offered to the tenant.
- Develop a targeted strategy to improve energy efficiency in mobile homes for Traveller communities, including a new trailer rental scheme with residential heating and insulation standards.

Key demand 2: **Warm homes for all, with lower bills and no fossil fuels**

- Expand the legal mandates and capacity of the SEAI and local authorities to reach those most in need of home energy upgrades. Mandate the SEAI to identify areas and households at risk of energy poverty and prioritise these as part of all energy renovation programmes and for area-based renovations; and ensure the SEAI partners directly with anti-poverty and community groups to reach those most in-need.
- Reinstate the Warmth and Wellbeing Scheme for free energy upgrades prescribed by health professionals, which has been proven to have significant financial and health impacts on individuals.
- Mandate and fully fund the development of Renovation Passports for shallow energy renovation works receiving public funding by 2026 to ensure they lead to high quality, deep retrofit over time.
- Pilot a dedicated retrofitting programme for rural households relying on solid fuel & oil heating systems that includes community engagement, education and new financial incentives. Review the efficiency threshold that qualifies houses for a deep retrofit grant, in order to lower the cost.
- Introduce a dedicated Energy Poverty Act in line with legislation in Scotland which would define energy poverty, set down ministerial duties, introduce legally bound targets and set up an independent energy poverty advisory council.
- Improve funding for the energy renovation of the AHBs' stock. This could be achieved either by increasing funding to match the level of funding made available to the social housing retrofit scheme or by further supporting the development of alternative financial mechanisms - e.g. zero-interest loans.
- Explore the expansion of initiatives, such as EnergyCloud, that utilise excess renewable energy by providing free heat to some AHBs, to include all social housing and AHBs.

(iii) Bring Fossil Heating to an End while Accelerating the Clean Heat Transition

Ireland has the lowest share of renewables used for heating across all EU countries. To date there has been significant progress in ending fossil fuel heating in new builds, however as it stands there is no dedicated legislation in place to accelerate renewable heat rollout across existing homes. Every investment in oil and gas heating today leaves households locked into burning fossil fuels for decades to come. Making fossil-free alternatives like heat pumps or renewable district heating more accessible and affordable for households must be an urgent priority for the next government. The mandate of Gas Networks Ireland must also be changed to align with climate obligations and prevent further domestic gas connections.

(ii) Prioritise Social Housing

Set out a plan to retrofit all social housing by 2030 that:

- Prioritises the worst-performing, least efficient homes first
- Sets out a multi-annual funding strategy that allows local authorities to build expertise and retain staff
- Ensures all aspects of energy renovation works are covered - including mechanical ventilation and scaffolding to renovate apartment blocks
- Prioritises renewable energy rollout, including solar PV installation on roofs
- To accelerate the decarbonisation of Ireland's heat sector, introduce a National Heat Law that includes:
 - A phase-out timeline for ending the installation of new oil and gas boilers in existing buildings by 2030, and an end to fossil fuel heating by 2035
 - End further expansion of the gas distribution network and introduce a decommissioning plan, starting with an end to new domestic and SME connections to the gas network from 2025
 - A Renewable Heat Guarantee - a guarantee that operational costs of heat pumps and



Key demand 2: **Warm homes for all, with lower bills and no fossil fuels**

district heating will be cheaper to run than their fossil fuel alternatives

- Remove the financial barriers facing households by:
 - Increasing SEAI grant support for heat pumps and ensure additional costs such as new radiators & ventilation are included
 - Introducing a Boiler Scrappage Bonus for exchange of oil boilers
 - Fully subsidising the Heat Pump Technical Assessment
- Prevent fossil fuel lock-in for low income households by significantly increasing the funding for the SEAI Warmer Homes Scheme. This will prevent further fossil fuel boiler installation and ensure all homes that receive energy upgrades have the opportunity to switch to renewable heating systems such as heat pumps.
- Use the opportunity of local authorities developing Local Heating & Cooling Plans (as required under the revised EU Energy Efficiency Directive) to
 - Create district heating zones across Ireland, ensuring households are aware of their area's district heating potential well in advance, and re-targeting heat pump grants to the areas ineligible for district heating.
 - Prioritise the development of local district heating networks by incorporating district heating considerations into urban planning frameworks, facilitating the establishment of community-owned heat networks, and developing spatial heat plans
 - Ensure dedicated funding for district heating infrastructure development given the significant capital investment required.
- Relax the stringent Heat Loss Indicator Requirements currently in place, which makes the cost and disruption of installing heat pumps prohibitive for many households. Also explore expanding accessibility of heat pumps by supporting fabric upgrades only to the extent needed for heat pump installation, as noted in the SEAI National Heat Study.
- Mandate all data centres to supply waste heat to district heating networks.

- Improve the maintenance of our air quality monitoring network and establish Low Emission Zones (LEZ) in all urban areas identified as air pollution hotspots; strengthen enforcement of the smoky fuels regulation to protect public health.

(iv) Protect Low-Income Households from High Energy Costs

Tackling energy poverty effectively must also mean addressing the structural issues of low incomes and high energy costs to ensure no household goes without the basic energy needed.

- Introduce an Energy Guarantee Scheme that provides a set amount of energy (e.g., 2400 kWh) for people in poorly insulated homes and those on low incomes.
- Increase the value of the Fuel Allowance by €196 annually to restore its purchasing power and expand eligibility to:
 - Include Working Family Payment recipients
 - Remove the waiting period for those on Jobseekers
 - Include the specific living arrangements of Traveller families
- Restore the value of all core social protection payments, ensuring they are above the poverty line and benchmarked against the Minimum Essential Standards of Living
- Address the key role of income inadequacy in energy poverty among older people by raising the contributory pension to 34% of the average industrial wage.
- Introduce a €40 a week Cost of Disability payment to support disabled people with the extra costs of living with a disability



Key demand 3: **Clean, affordable renewable energy for people, not data centres and big tech**

The next Government must break Ireland's dependence on dirty, expensive fossil fuels, often imported from rogue states, and make sure that the development of Ireland's abundant clean energy resources prioritises local communities, our collective power needs, and nature, rather than the demands of big business for ever more consumption.

We urge all candidates and parties to commit to:

(a) Rapidly ramp up renewables while promoting community ownership and protecting nature

- In order to power our transport and heat our homes into the future, deliver the commitment in the Climate Action Plan to 9GW of onshore wind, 8GW of solar and at least 5GW of offshore wind by 2030, together with associated grid infrastructure.
- Set a target of a 100% renewable electricity system by 2035.
- Guarantee solar panels on the roof of every school and on the roofs of 1 million homes by 2030.
- Ramp up support for the installation of solar PV systems to ensure that consumers are empowered to produce, store, use and sell sustainable electricity, as noted by the Climate Change Advisory Council. The Government should also explore dedicated community solar and battery storage projects which can both reduce emissions and increase electricity security.
- Build on the Small-Scale Renewable Electricity Generation Scheme and improve national and EU support to community energy groups; introduce specific timelines and targets for community energy development in line with similar EU Member States.
- Remove blockages to local community-owned renewable energy projects, in particular grid connection, so that communities can lead the renewable energy transition, and support resilient, diversified local economies, while also building public support for renewables and improving electricity security.

- Revisit the question of shared-ownership opportunities for developer-led projects, which has proven successful in other countries at facilitating public participation in the energy transition, was promised here but was then stalled by an administrative decision.
- As part of renewables and grid development, ensure comprehensive nature protection and restoration, nature-positive planning, community engagement and public participation.
- Ensure appropriate access to the courts on environmental grounds, in compliance with the Aarhus Convention.

(b) Press pause on more data centres coming online until the threat their increasing electricity usage poses to the security or sustainability of our energy system has been removed.

- Urgently introduce a legal moratorium on new data centre developments until a robust legislative and regulatory framework is established that ensures they pose no threat to our binding limits on climate pollution or the security of our electricity supply.
- The regulatory framework should include:
 - Strict limits on electricity consumption used by existing centres, not only new connections.
 - A prohibition on Gas Networks Ireland connecting any further connection data centres to the gas network given the risks of locking-in long-term use of fossil gas.
 - A requirement for all data centres to invest in substantive renewables, storage and energy efficiency (including rooftop PV, heat pumps and batteries) all to the maximum extent possible on their own sites, in order to reduce their dependence on the national grid and fossil fuels, and to prevent undue reliance on external renewable projects.
 - Measures to ensure data centres do not result in additional fossil fuel generation. These must also ensure existing data centres produce a decarbonisation plan to phase out

Key demand 3: **Clean, affordable renewable energy for people, not data centres and big tech**

fossil fuel usage, including fossil gas and diesel used on their sites.

- A requirement for the Government to produce transparent information each year on the number and type of current and new data centres, while also ending speculative data centre applications that inflate expected energy use and strain resources.
- A requirement that data centres annually disclose their current emissions and future projections.
- Review the structure of the PSO levy so that residential customers are not paying a disproportionately high amount due to the current structure whereby users are charged on the basis of their contribution to peak demand, as opposed to calculating the PSO based on a user groups' average demand.
- Ensure that the cost burden which Data Centres have placed on the grid through their expansion is recouped from the profits of the industry and not charged to public or residential users.

(c) Drive the phase out of fossil fuels at home, champion it internationally

Nationally

- Introduce legislative amendments to ensure the next Climate Action Plan explicitly includes clear trajectories and timelines to a) ensure fossil fuel phase out in all sectors b) avoid the risk of fossil fuel lock-in and c) reduce dependence on fossil fuels, all consistent with the Carbon Budgets, the Sectoral Emissions Ceilings, and the gas demand reduction scenarios in the Energy Security Package of November 2023.
- Mandate the CRU to proactively plan for gas phase out in accordance with carbon budgets, including setting a timeline for decommissioning of the entire residential gas distribution network while ensuring gas customers are protected both in terms of their bills and in terms of heating alternatives.

- Do not permit any new infrastructure that prolongs our dependence on fossil fuels and permanently ban any kind of LNG terminals in Ireland.
 - We campaigned for the Government's 2021 Policy Statement on the Importation of Fracked Gas that institutionalised state policy against the importation of fracked gas and introduced what the Government described as a moratorium on all LNG import terminals. We strongly welcomed An Bord Pleanála's rejection of the Shannon LNG project in 2023, which was based on that 2021 Government policy statement.
 - We were horrified in October 2024 when the High Court found that "the Government policy does not constitute a moratorium" and instructed An Bord Pleanála to reconsider Shannon LNG's planning application for a large commercial LNG terminal in Kerry. We have called on the outgoing Government to immediately reinstate the moratorium that is agreed Government policy, in a legally robust manner this time.
 - We do not believe that the importation of fracked gas or any LNG has any place in the transition to a fossil free future. Any such infrastructure would only serve to lock-in gas use in the 2030s - the very period when gas demand is planned to rapidly decline in accordance with our climate obligations. The Government's Energy Security package in November 2023 made clear that gas demand must reduce substantially over the coming decade and that any energy security response must be in accordance with climate law¹.
 - It was also significant that the Energy Security package ruled out commercial LNG import terminals in any circumstances, a policy decision that the High Court ruling seems to both ignore and undermine. And we reject the outgoing Government's identification of a state-controlled floating LNG terminal as an option for a temporary emergency gas reserve. We do not believe that hypothetical

1. The Government's 2023 Energy Security Decision states: "Natural gas demand sees a significant reduction of between 68-78% from 2030 to 2040, depending on the scenario considered. This demonstrates the significant reduction of natural gas use anticipated, reducing the reliance on imports during this period and its limited role in our energy system as we reach 2040."



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Key demand 3: **Clean, affordable renewable energy for people, not data centres and big tech**

risks to Ireland's gas interconnectors to Scotland justify accepting the certain risk of climate breakdown involved in any increase in the supply of gas to Ireland.

- Minister Ryan himself recently noted that "It would not be possible to deliver a facility until early in the next decade" by which time we may have "a dramatic reduction in gas use, particularly in the electricity generation sector". The Minister also underlined that further analysis was necessary as to "an alternative way to meet the security risk", explaining that expected improvements in the electricity system thanks to new renewables and interconnectors have significantly changed the picture in terms of gas needs. He emphasised that LNG "is not a strategic priority for this Government, or I believe for the next Government".
- We are confident that a comprehensive independent assessment of future gas supply and demand risks and future electricity security options will vindicate our opposition to LNG. The evidence suggests it is likely to conclude that in an energy trajectory that is properly aligned with our legally binding Carbon Budgets, a combination of demand reduction, energy efficiency, renewables growth, battery storage and interconnection would make any gas reserve an expensive, risky, redundant white elephant. This position has huge public support, from voters for all parties, according to polling by Ireland Thinks in October 2024.
- We want the Government to introduce a permanent legal ban on LNG import terminals of any kind.
- Ensure fossil fuel lobbyists do not distort public policy for private profit by introducing legislation to amend the code of practice for designated public officials in order to -
 - Limit interactions with fossil fuel lobbyists to only where strictly necessary to enable designated public officials to effectively regulate the industry and accelerate the transition to a fossil-free economy.
 - When interactions do occur, they will be

requested by a designated public official, be held in a place that is open to the public, with public notice given in advance, and with detailed minutes published online.

- Exclude fossil fuel lobbyists from participation in public bodies' boards, as well as expert and advisory bodies.
- Refuse to allow fossil fuel lobbyists organise events, exhibitions, or other activities on government premises, including in the Houses of the Oireachtas complex.
- Introduce mandatory cooling-off periods for officials transitioning from the public sector to private industry roles.
- Reform and replace the current regulatory system by the Advertising Standards Authority, which is a limited, self-regulatory body managed by the advertising industry. Introduce dedicated legislation to establish a new regulatory framework and state body with powers to prevent and respond to misleading and inappropriate advertising practices, in particular those relating to climate and the environment.
- Legislate to ban advertising for fossil fuels, advertising from companies or public bodies involved in fossil fuel production and distribution, as well as advertising promoting cars, boilers and flights that use fossil fuels.
- Urgently produce a plan for phase out of state fossil fuel subsidies and redirect state spending at activities to support climate action. Fossil fuel subsidies were estimated at €2.9 billion in 2021. Government has failed to respond to European Commission demands for a transparent strategy and timeline for removal of such subsidies.

Internationally

- Champion fossil fuel phase out internationally by endorsing the proposal for a new Fossil Fuel Non Proliferation Treaty.
- Build on Ireland's current work at international level to progress fossil fuel phase out by further developing our participation in the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance.

2. See https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/joint_committee_on_environment_and_climate_action/2024-09-19/2/



Key demand 4: Affordable, reliable, and accessible fossil-free transport

The next Government must make public transport, walking and cycling so easy, safe and cheap, and make our electric car network so reliable and affordable that, by 2030, an end to the sale of new fossil fuel cars is an obvious and uncontroversial next step.

We urge all parties and candidates to commit to:

(a) Accelerate investment in public transport and maintain the new lower fares

- Achieve the current commitment to invest at least €2 in public transport for every €1 in new roads. Mandate TII and CCAC to advise on the level of public investment needed to achieve our transport emissions targets.
- Fast track new Luas lines for Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford in an updated National Development Plan.
- At the moment only one new Luas line is being actively designed in Dublin (to Finglas) and the additional 8 lines proposed by the NTA under the GDA transportation strategy are not planned to come onstream until 2042. All 8 should be fast-tracked in an updated National Development Plan.
- Accelerate the roll out of Bus Connects and continue to develop the successful rural Links service based on a vision of “every village, every hour”. Invest at least €50 million annually in the Rural Transport Programme.
- Ensure that public transport is disability-inclusive and child and elderly-friendly by providing appropriate access and space for wheelchairs and other mobility supports, and that streets, footpaths and cycle lanes are designed to ensure that children, older people and people with disabilities can move about safely.
- Support state funded communications campaigns around promoting public transport and active travel.

(b) Make busing, cycling and walking to school and work so safe and easy it becomes the norm for as many people as possible.

- Ensure all schools, colleges and creches are connected to local housing with footpaths and bike lanes. Build safe routes to school for cycling and walking within a 3km radius of every school.
- Free more school streets from cars and use one way systems to make arrival at school on bike and foot as safe as possible and ban engine idling near schools.
- Guarantee a free school bus place for anyone who wants one. Invest in a fleet of electric buses and mini-buses.
- Make public transport free for children under 16.
- Make permanent the current 20% reduction in adult public transport fares and the 50% reduction for under 26 year olds (on the Young Adult Travel Card). Roll out more flat-fares nationwide like the two euro 90-minute fare in Dublin.
- Deliver active travel (walking & cycling) facilities as part of Cycle Connects, the Active Travel framework and the National Cycle Network, with priority funding given to fast-build active travel schemes, School Streets and Safe Routes to School, as well as high quality cycle networks.
- Decouple the Bike to Work scheme from PAYE tax.

(c) Break our dependence on fossil-fuel cars, target EV subsidies at rural drivers

- Maintain and fulfil the commitment to key 2030 targets in the Climate Action Plan: e.g.
 - reducing our dependence on cars from 3 in every 4 journeys to 1 in every 2
 - more than doubling daily public transport journeys,
 - an increase in active travel journeys by 50%,
 - shifting 1 in 3 car journeys to school to sustainable modes,
 - achieving a 20% reduction in commuting kilometres by private car.

Key demand 4: **Affordable, reliable, and accessible fossil-free transport**

- Continue the application of the Avoid-Shift-Improve framework for sustainable transport with a view to banning the use of combustion engines in cities from 2030.
- Target EV subsidies at rural drivers who have fewer alternative transport options.
- Introduce a congestion charge in Dublin immediately that escalates by emissions and weight and extend it to other urban areas as more public transport comes on stream.
- Designate Low Emission Zones (LEZ) in all urban areas identified as air pollution hotspots.
- Reform VRT and motor tax to be weight-based as well as emissions to discourage the proliferation of larger and larger vehicles, particularly SUVs, that are increasing congestion on narrower city streets, make the roads more dangerous for other road users, and emit more CO₂ than smaller cars
- Free workplace parking in the city essentially constitutes a car subsidy. Supports should be prioritised for those not using a car parking space, e.g. through a subsidised bus ticket or a payment for cycling to work, and parking levies should be phased in on workplace parking in city centres, combined with free/subsidised park and ride facilities on arterial routes to all cities.
- In light of the housing crisis and high commuting costs, introduce tailored supports for public sectors workers, specifically junior/lower-income positions in teaching, nursing and community health, including:
 - Extension of tax reliefs on public transport and cycling to work
 - Dedicated subsidised public transport tickets
 - EV social leasing scheme and grants for home charging.
- Mandate the Climate Change Advisory Council to advise on how soon it is necessary to end the sale of new petrol and diesel cars (the EU backstop date of 2035 is regarded as too late) and remove polluting engines from our city streets (Stockholm is starting this in its city centre in 2025) in order to reduce polluting emissions in line with air quality improvements for public health and our binding climate commitments.
- As a backstop, pending the outcome of the CCAC review, commit to ending the sale of new petrol and diesel cars, including hybrids, and the sale of fossil fuel vans, trucks and HGVs by 2030 at the latest. And to remove polluting cars from our city centres by 2030.
- Introduce a 'Right to Charge' - every household should be able to avail of reliable and low cost EV charging facilities.
- Mandate the Department of Public Expenditure and the Department of Transport to undertake a nationwide study on private car dependency in terms of costs associated with congestion, adverse health effects and non-compliance costs in relation to climate and the environment.
- County Development plans should be required to prioritise:
 - Land use planning that prevents car-dependent sprawl.
 - Mandatory bike parking at new developments
 - Maximum, not minimum, numbers of car parking spaces.
 - Smart management of traffic flows and volumes to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety - all road improvements for vehicles should only be justified on road safety grounds.

Aviation

- Take steps to prevent further growth of aviation emissions. If it were a country, the global aviation industry would be in the world's top 10 carbon emitters. Since 1990, Ireland's population has grown by 40%, but emissions from aviation have increased by 500%. Aviation emissions from 2023 were the highest on record, and technical 'silver bullets' to prevent aviation pollution are not on the horizon.
 - Maintain the passenger cap in Dublin Airport and introduce a moratorium on airport expansion, pending an independent review of existing and potential future aviation emissions in the context of national and international climate obligations.
 - Introduce a Frequent Flyer Levy. In the US, 7 out of 8 people take less than 6 flights a year. Globally, 50% of aviation emissions are caused by 1% of the world's population. Containing emissions starts with charging those who fly a lot, particularly business



Key demand 4: **Affordable, reliable, and accessible fossil-free transport**

- flights, to encourage a shift to alternatives where possible.
- Develop a plan to reduce and phase out private jets landing and departing from Ireland. Explore the introduction of a carbon tax on all private jets departing from Irish airports. This most unequal and polluting form of transport is growing rapidly with 1 in 10 flights leaving UK airports now a private aircraft. In Dublin private flights grew from under 900 to almost 7,000 in just two years to 2022, with the most frequent route Dublin to London, one of the best served passenger routes in the world. Elite convenience must not be allowed to trump the common good.
 - Support the removal of the Jet Kerosene tax exemption at national and EU level. This leads to the greatest emission reductions at the lowest cost to the economy.
 - Develop aviation taxation which targets CO2 directly and the carbon content of fuel.
 - Ensure imports of unsustainable biodiesel are rejected across the aviation and other transport sectors, given risks that these imports may be driving tropical deforestation. Biofuel imports should be limited to from the EU.





Key demand 5: A fair deal for family farmers, to feed Ireland and restore nature

The next Government must ensure the state, supermarkets and food processors pay farmers enough to support less polluting forms of agriculture and land use that produce local food, clean water, and a countryside where family farms and nature thrive.

We urge all candidates and parties to commit to:

- Secure fair prices for Irish farmers from the supermarkets that dominate the food supply chain, through the new Agri Food Regulator or by other means if necessary.
 - As part of the EU's commitment to strengthen the position of farmers in the food supply, protect producers against below cost selling and competition from Free Trade Agreements.
 - Support ending the negotiations on the outdated EU-Mercosur free-trade agreement. The controversial EU-Mercosur deal would increase deforestation, pesticide use, threaten indigenous people's rights as well as increase unfair competition for Irish farmers. As shown in the European Commission's own impact assessment, the free-trade-agreement, instead of fighting the climate emergency, would worsen it.
 - Reform the legal mandates, governance and operations of Irish state agencies, from Coillte and Bord na Mona to Teagasc and Bord Bia to align with our climate and nature goals.
 - Guarantee that any successor to Food Vision 2030 will reduce Irish farmers' reliance on polluting dairy and beef for export, on the one hand, and reduce Irish people's reliance on imports for our food security on the other.
 - Reform food policy, ensuring institutional recognition for local food producers, a local food policy framework and a multi-department, integrated approach to reviving and climate-proofing our rural communities.
 - Prepare Ireland's forthcoming nature restoration plan in collaboration with stakeholders including scientists, farmers and environmentalists. Ensure it is adequately funded through the creation of a National Nature Restoration Fund.
 - Sustain recent progress in reducing the use of chemical nitrogen fertilizer and continue to build on that to ensure Ireland's water quality improves.
- Regulate more strictly pesticide use for both State-body, industrial and personal purposes.
 - Review the Acres Co-operation programme. Moving forward, farmers must be supported with agri-environmental schemes which are long-term, adequately funded, locally-led and results-based. The reformed programme should be aligned with the Nature Restoration Plan and the Climate Action Plan.
 - Finalize the national land use plan that is in development in a way that balances all the things a thriving people need from their nation's land: food, water, carbon storage, nature, and recreation.
 - Make sure the next EU Common Agricultural Policy (2028-2032) adequately rewards farmers for those public goods we need them to provide and aligns with our binding commitments on climate and nature.
 - Enact the long-overdue Marine Protected Areas (MPA) legislation to safeguard our seas. Designate 30% of Irish waters as Marine Protected Areas and 10% as strictly protected.
 - Make the Department of Environment the responsible Department for all nature conservation functions, including:
 - the NPWS, the Forest Service, the EPA and the Water Division.
 - the Marine Environment.
 - Bord na Mona and Coillte.





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