



## PRESS RELEASE

### **Climate Change Advisory Council calls for urgent action to protect most vulnerable from over dependence on fossil fuels**

The Climate Change Advisory Council has called for swift and decisive action to support people and communities this winter by addressing Ireland's dependence on harmful fossil fuels, which it says is a root cause of high energy costs, supply instability and high levels of carbon dioxide emissions.

The Council, who published their Annual Review for 2022 today, has said that the transition to more affordable, clean and secure energy must be urgently progressed and focus on measures that can be immediately deployed to assist those most in need in the coming months and in the years ahead.

Pinpointing long standing barriers to a sustainable, resilient and low carbon future, the Council has called on the Government to ensure that action supports households, communities and businesses through this energy crisis in order to reduce Ireland's dependence on fossil fuels. The Council has made specific recommendations to support consumers and reduce emissions in the areas of transport, electricity, buildings and industry.

Stressing the urgency to implement policies now, the Council has said that the energy crisis must be addressed in both the short and long term. Developing renewable resource must be considered as being in the overriding public interest. Targets for onshore wind and solar renewable electricity should be significantly increased, with faster roll out of these and the associated grid reinforcement. Offshore wind will play a critical role in the low carbon transition and it is imperative that steps for planning and consenting, as well as developing the grid, progress at pace. Strong political and policy support is needed at a national and local level for the rapid delivery of renewable resources.

Chair of the Climate Change Advisory Council, Marie Donnelly said: "We must maintain our focus on reducing our use of fossil fuels. By expediting the delivery of crucially important indigenous renewable resources, Ireland's long term energy future can be secured, households and businesses can be protected against cost volatility while also supporting climate change objectives.

As we approach what will be one of the most challenging winters in a generation, it is imperative that we support communities by protecting the most vulnerable in society, particularly those in receipt of the winter fuel allowance and those living in the worst performing buildings.

"There are measures that can be introduced immediately that will have a significant impact, including accelerating the roll out of home energy upgrades such as the installation of attic insulation, draught proofing, regular servicing of boilers, installation of heating controls, and simplifying the paperwork to access grants. These low cost and easily applied measures will support vulnerable households in the short term making a difference to people's energy bills, health and wellbeing."



“Additionally, the reduction in public transport fares should be retained and extended with an assessment of the effectiveness of both measures in terms of supporting the vulnerable and reducing emissions.”

Following the announcement of the Government’s sectoral targets in July, the Council has also said that the upcoming National Climate Action Plan must set out a clear pathway for all sectors and identify measures that can be prioritised to help Ireland achieve its climate change ambition and support a more sustainable future.

Whilst the likely impacts of climate change on Ireland are becoming more evident, the Council has concluded that Ireland is not adequately prepared.

The Chair added, “Recent extreme weather events across the globe including droughts and floods show that the impacts of climate change are immediate and require urgent action in respect of mitigation and adaptation. While government investment must increase with unambiguous and targeted plans in place, business, civic and community organisations can and must play a pivotal role in supporting people to overcome the current energy crisis and in helping Ireland to deliver on its climate obligations.”

The Annual Review 2022 has been submitted to the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications and will be available at <https://www.climatecouncil.ie/councilpublications>

**ENDS**

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