



Press Release

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Government must address rising emissions in the built environment and provide wider supports for heat pump and solar PV adoption– Climate Change Advisory Council

The Climate Change Advisory Council has today called on the Government to improve supports for retrofitting, heat pumps and solar PV. These grants are critical to increase energy efficiency, reduce energy costs, lower emissions and support resilience in households. In particular, the Council has recommended funding to increase delivery of retrofitting and solar PV for Local Authority housing.

With increasing challenges around global competitiveness, the Council has recommended an accelerated rollout of solar PV for commercial and public buildings to help manage energy costs.

Despite progress in retrofitting and energy upgrades, emissions in residential buildings, along with commercial and public buildings increased by 4.9% and 7.9% respectively. Both the residential buildings sector and the commercial and public buildings sector are projected to exceed their sectoral emissions ceilings.

In its Built Environment, Industry and Waste Sectoral Review published today, the Council recommends that the Government urgently finalise the Heat Bill this year and must also immediately introduce enhanced supports to promote the uptake of heat pumps and roll out district heating. It is also essential that a clear plan to phase out fossil fuel boilers must be included within the National Building Renovation Plan, which is due to be published this year.

Although industrial emissions reduced by 4.6% in 2024, mainly due to a decline in cement volumes, Ireland has not yet broken the link between production levels and emissions in the industrial sector. This underlines the need for a more efficient approval process for low-carbon cement technologies, and a requirement for all new buildings to have resource and waste management plans to minimise the consumption of materials and reduce waste in construction.

The national Deposit Return Scheme has been well received with a good level of uptake. While waste sector emissions also fell, the Council has said the volume of waste generated remains too high and household recycling rates are not improving. Ireland's circularity rate of 2.3% is well below the EU average of 11.8%¹, highlighting

¹ Eurostat, 'Statistics Explained: File: T1Circularity rate, 2010–2023 (%) (2).png'. Accessed: Jun. 11, 2025. [Online]. Available: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:T1Circularity_rate_2010-2023_\(%25\)_2.png](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:T1Circularity_rate_2010-2023_(%25)_2.png)

the need to end wasteful practices and make better use of the resources we already have. Concerted action in this area will have economic and environmental benefits.

Commenting Marie Donnelly, Chair of the Climate Change Advisory Council said, "The Built Environment is the only sector that saw emissions increase in 2024. Government must urgently take action to increase the availability of grants for households focussed on the uptake of heat pumps and maintain the level of grants for the installation of solar PV. This will not only help achieve our climate targets, but it will also reduce energy costs for consumers and improve the warmth of people's homes. In addition, the Council has previously said that the roll out of smart meters must be better utilised to help customers to save money, change consumption patterns and reduce emissions.

"The Council welcomes the recent allocation of funds to support development costs of district heating projects and looks forward to the roll out of district heating networks in Ireland. This can stabilise costs for consumers and help protect Ireland against the volatility of fossil fuel prices."

On the need to be more resilient towards extreme weather events, Ms. Donnelly added, "We need to adapt, now, to our changing climate. Recent storms, including Storm Éowyn, highlight how vulnerable our communities are to extreme winds and flooding. To increase community resilience, we need to ensure that planning guidelines are properly followed so that new housing is not built in locations at risk from future flooding and does not lead to increased vulnerability and maladaptation."

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If you have any questions or are seeking further comment, please do not hesitate to contact:

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