

Statement by the Chair of the Climate Change Advisory Council following the publication of Ireland's Provisional Greenhouse Gas Emissions for 1990 to 2021

The provisional estimates of Ireland's Greenhouse Gas Emissions for 1990-2021, published by the EPA today confirms that Ireland has not yet broken the link between economic growth and greenhouse gas emissions. (see Figure 1)

2021 was the first year of the 5-year Carbon Budget, enacted into law by the Oireachtas, setting a limit of 295 Mt CO₂ eq emissions over the period. Given that emissions totalled 69.3 Mt CO₂ eq in 2021 which accounts for 23.5% of the total carbon budget for the period, (see Table 1) this means the effort over the next four years must increase significantly.

Fossil fuels used in transport, buildings and electricity represent just under 50% of emissions which must be reduced and this, combined with the increasing cost of fossil fuels (and potential shortages), reinforces the need for a sea change in communities throughout Ireland.

We need to urgently reduce our dependence on imported fossil fuels thus benefiting society by shielding people from volatile energy prices, increasing our security of energy and supporting the achievement of our climate objective. There should be much a greater focus on overall demand reduction which saves money and addresses both the energy and climate challenge.

Measures which can be implemented in advance of winter should be targeted at those in challenging circumstances, fuel poverty and with low incomes in order to offer them the maximum protection from the current price volatility. This includes the provision of income supports and targeted investment that will support society in reducing its dependency on fossil fuels.

We also need to decarbonise the electricity sector through a significant uplift in the use of our indigenous renewable resources such as wind and solar power. Enabling small-scale renewable energy through rooftop solar, provides an opportunity to increase household energy production and reduce the high level of household and business energy costs.

There is concern that the current timelines for delivery of core measures within the Climate Action Plan are too long and the procedures to facilitate the delivery of these measures are not progressing quickly enough. The most impactful measures must urgently be prioritised and accelerated at a rate not previously foreseen.

Commenting on the provisional inventory data Chair of the Climate Change Advisory Council, Marie Donnelly said 'the figures released today underline the urgency of action required to achieve our climate objective. Given the challenges that families and communities will face this winter, the Government should immediately launch an information campaign to identify ways in which everyone, including consumers, households and businesses, can reduce demand. It is crucially important that all sectors redouble their efforts to lower their greenhouse gas emissions.'



Figure 1 Modified GNI* & Total Greenhouse Gas Emissions 2014-2021

Table 1 Emission by Sector 2018, 2021

Carbon Budget 2021 – 2025, progress in 2021¹			
	Baseline year (2018)	2021	% change²
Energy	36.2	34.3	-1.7%
Industrial Processes including F-Gases	3.2	3.2	+0.3%
Agriculture	23.1	23.1	+0.1%
Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry	6.9	7.8	+4.2%
Waste	1.0	0.9	-1.9%
Total Emissions including LULUCF	70.2	69.3	-0.4%

¹ Source – EPA (2022) Ireland’s Provisional Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Table 4)

² Expressed as annual average rates of change

