

Press Release: Thursday, 13 November 2008
From: Energy Efficiency & Micro-Generation Bill Steering Group.

*****For Immediate Use*****

Parliament calls on Government to back Boyack's Bill Proposals to reduce energy bills and tackle climate change

Fuel poverty, environment and renewables industry groups today enthusiastically welcomed the cross party vote in the Scottish Parliament for Scottish Government to tackle climate change and reduce energy bills by taking the steps set out in the Energy Efficiency and Microgeneration (Scotland) Bill proposals.

The organisations including Barnardo's Scotland, Energy Action Scotland, Friends of the Earth Scotland, Scottish Renewables and WWF Scotland have been backing this legislation since 2005 to help deliver warm, energy efficient homes and workplaces that are good for people and the planet. Scottish Government has made announcements on energy efficiency and micro-generation but none yet ensure that energy efficiency improvements and microgeneration measures are mainstreamed across society by requiring or incentivising such measures in homes or businesses.

The proposals backed by the Parliament would help cut domestic energy bills and tackle fuel poverty as well as climate change through a range of measures, including incentives such as reduced business rates or reductions on council tax for business premises and domestic households who install energy efficiency improvements and microgeneration measures.

Maureen Fraser, Barnardo's Scotland said:

'Thousands of children and families in Scotland are living in fuel poor homes this very day – which is a moral disgrace. By adopting the principles outlined in Sarah Boyack's Bill in their Climate Change Bill, the Government would be taking bold steps to help eradicate fuel poverty by 2016- this is what is needed and we would applaud them for it.'

Dr Richard Dixon, WWF Scotland said:

"Scottish Government must make it easy for home owners and landlords to improve the energy performance of the housing stock and do so with urgency. As well as helping to tackle climate change, these legislative proposals could deliver huge wins for householders, businesses, the construction and renewable industry in Scotland.

With such clear support from across the Parliament, WWF looks forward to seeing these proposals addressed in the Scottish Climate Change Bill when it is introduced in December."

Duncan McLaren, Friends of the Earth Scotland said:

"Increasing investment in energy efficiency and microgeneration is one of the best possible ways of stimulating the Scottish economy in a socially just and environmentally friendly manner. We are delighted that the Scottish Government is now committed to support tougher targets and standards, and more financial incentives in these areas."

Norman Kerr, Director, Energy Action Scotland said:

"Improving the energy efficiency of Scotland's housing is a vital step in 'fuel poverty proofing' our homes. To achieve this, we need to go beyond the basic insulation measures and these

proposals for new energy efficiency improvements and microgeneration will make it easier to mainstream the solutions we know will deliver on-going benefits for householders."



Editors notes:

1. The Members of the Bill Steering Group are: Age Concern, Barnardos, Edinburgh Energy and Environment Consultants, Energy Action Scotland, Friends of the Earth Scotland, Scottish Renewables and WWF Scotland.

2. The motion for debate in Scottish Labour business was:

S3M-2864 Sarah Boyack: Energy Efficiency—That the Parliament recognises the significant role that energy efficiency and microgeneration measures could have in reducing energy costs for householders and businesses, in achieving urgent reductions in greenhouse gas emissions of at least 80% by 2050 and contributing to the eradication of fuel poverty by 2016; notes that research carried out by the Energy Savings Trust suggests that widespread installation of microgeneration could provide 30 to 40% of our electricity needs by 2050 but that current investment in energy efficiency and microgeneration measures is insufficient to achieve these goals, and calls on the Scottish Government to take steps, as set out in the Energy Efficiency and Microgeneration Bill proposals, such as fiscal incentives for householders and businesses, to improve the energy efficiency of new and existing housing stock and ensure that microgeneration technologies become widely available and used.

2. The following amendment was also passed: **S3M-2864.1 Patrick Harvie: Energy Efficiency**—As an amendment to motion (S3M-2864) in the name of Sarah Boyack, leave out from "improve" to end and insert "ensure that microgeneration technologies become widely available and used and to consider other energy efficiency measures for new and existing housing stock to tackle fuel poverty, climate change and security of energy supply; notes the evidence given by Friends of the Earth Scotland to the Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee suggesting that an additional £100 million per annum would be a welcome change to the draft budget for 2009-10, and calls on the Scottish Government to consider a comprehensive and fully funded Scotland-wide scheme on this scale to provide energy audits, insulation provision and financial support for micro-renewables where appropriate."

3. The legislation set out by Sarah Boyack's Energy Efficiency and Microgeneration (Scotland) Member's Bill proposals would:

- Provide incentives, such as reduced business rates or reductions on Council tax, for business premises and domestic households who install new energy efficiency improvements and microgeneration measures.
- Require Government to set targets for energy efficiency and micro-generation and for local authorities to set targets and strategies to take this forward.
- Require all new building developments to ensure energy efficiency measures are installed as standard and include capacity for microgeneration
- Require annual reports to Parliament on progress and implementation of these measures.

4. The Steering Group Briefing for today's debate is at

<http://www.microgenscotland.org.uk/BriefforDebate13thNov08F.pdf>