

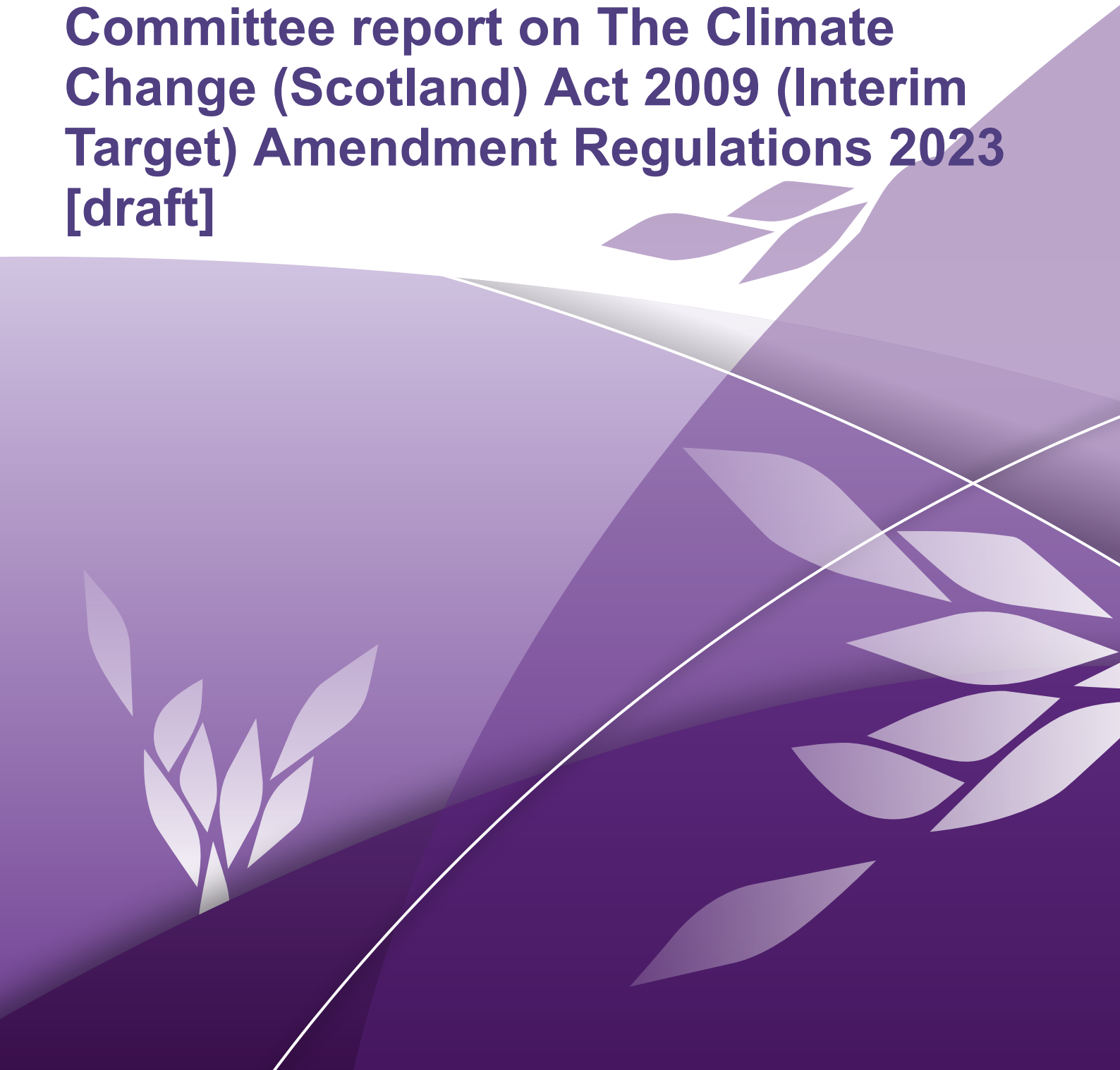


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Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee

Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee report on The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 (Interim Target) Amendment Regulations 2023 [draft]



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Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee

To consider and report on matters falling within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport, with the exception of matters relating to rural land use, wildlife crime and animal welfare.



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Introduction

1. [The Climate Change \(Scotland\) Act 2009 \(Interim Target\) Amendment Regulations 2023](#) [draft] was laid before Parliament on 31 March 2023 and is subject to the affirmative procedure. The draft instrument was referred to the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee for consideration.
2. It is for the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee to recommend to the Scottish Parliament whether the Regulations should be approved. The Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Just Transition, Mairi McAllan MSP, lodged motion [S6M-08482](#) which recommended the Committee approve the Regulations.
3. The instrument relates to Scotland's emission reductions targets and how they are calculated. Scotland's current statutory targets are derived from provisions set out in the [Climate Change \(Emissions Reduction Targets\) \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#). The Scottish Government's statutory adviser for its emissions reduction targets, the Committee on Climate Change (CCC), has a statutory function to review Scotland's emissions reduction targets at least every five years.
4. In 2022, [the CCC published its first five-yearly review](#) of Scotland's emissions targets. The report highlighted that since 2019 there has been developments in scientific understandings of greenhouse gas emissions. As such, the CCC said previous advice they had provided to the Scottish Government in relation to emissions reduction targets was now based on outdated emissions accounting methodology. They recommended for Scotland's annual targets in the 2020s to be adjusted in order to reflect updated knowledge about the treatment of peatland emissions. The CCC said this adjustment constituted a technical change to the percentage figures setting out amended pathway of emissions reductions, and did not require any change to statutory targets for 2030 or 2045.
5. The [Policy Note](#) accompanying the draft Regulations says its purpose is to amend the percentage figure of the 2020 interim emissions reduction target to embed new practices in relation to international carbon reporting, following the current advice received from the CCC.

Consideration by the Delegated Powers and Law Reform (DPLR) Committee

6. At its meeting on 25 April 2023, the DPLR Committee considered the draft Regulations. [The Committee's report](#), published later that day, said that it did not need to draw the attention of the Parliament to the instrument on any grounds within its remit.

[Read the Official Report – 25 April 2023](#)

Consideration by the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee

7. At its meeting on 9 May 2023, the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee took evidence on the draft Regulations from—

- Màiri McAllan, Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Just Transition, Scottish Government;
- Norman Munro, Solicitor, Scottish Government; and
- Philip Raines, Deputy Director, Domestic Climate Change, Scottish Government.

8. The evidence taken and debate held at that meeting regarding this instrument can be found in the Official Report.

[Read the Official Report from 9 May 2023.](#)

9. In her opening remarks, the Cabinet Secretary said the instrument was a technical adjustment to modify emissions reduction targets following updated advice from the CCC and did not represent a lowering of Scotland's Net Zero ambitions.ⁱ

10. The Committee asked if the Cabinet Secretary currently anticipated further changes being made to emissions targets as a result of developments in scientific understandings around concepts such as blue carbon. The Cabinet Secretary said she expected advances in science and technology to require adjustments to be made in all aspects of Scotland's net zero journey. She noted the CCC has a statutory duty to review emissions targets on a five-yearly basis to assess if further recommendations are needed to adapt to new findings.ⁱⁱ

11. The Committee questioned if accommodating new thinking around blue carbon could open up opportunities for further progress to be made in reducing emissions. The Cabinet Secretary stated that blue carbon could be a useful and important component of Scotland's carbon accounting once a settled position has been determined. She said current understanding of blue carbon was underdeveloped in comparison to the terrestrial space, but the Scottish Government was investing in blue carbon research and supporting marine conservation initiatives in this field.ⁱⁱⁱ

12. The Committee asked how the Scottish Government would address key concerns by the CCC about the lack of a delivery plan with quantifiable details for how key milestones will be achieved. The Cabinet Secretary said that the Scottish Government will respond to the CCC's recent report in the coming months. It will also lay a draft of the Climate Change Plan, which will look holistically across Scotland's society and set out how emissions reduction will be achieved against sectoral envelopes.^{iv}

i Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee. [Official Report, 9 May 2023](#), col 2.

ii Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee. [Official Report, 9 May 2023](#), col 3.

iii Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee. [Official Report, 9 May 2023](#), col 4.

13. The Committee queried what measures the Scottish Government will consider introducing to meet its target of reducing car kilometres by 20% by 2030, noting concerns raised by the CCC in achieving that objective. The Cabinet Secretary said proposals were currently being developed, but this would be included in Scottish Government's response to the CCC and taken forward in the upcoming Climate Change Plan. The Committee probed when the response to the CCC would be published. The Cabinet Secretary indicated this would come in advance of the publication of the Climate Change Plan, which will be laid in November.^v
14. The Committee asked how the Cabinet Secretary will ensure cross-party support will be maintained for the Climate Change Plan given the revised emissions targets. The Cabinet Secretary said a key aspect of fostering collaboration was through a working group established to support the development of the Climate Change Plan. She said this group included representatives of different political parties and stakeholders from across civic society.^{vi}
15. Following the conclusion of evidence taking, the Cabinet Secretary moved motion S6M-08482 in her name—

That the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee recommends that the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 (Interim Target) Amendment Regulations 2023 [draft] be approved.

16. The motion was agreed to without debate or division.

iv Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee. [Official Report, 9 May 2023](#) , col 4-5.

v Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee. [Official Report, 9 May 2023](#) , col 4-5.

vi Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee. [Official Report, 9 May 2023](#) , col 5-6.

Conclusion

17. The Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee recommends that the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 (Interim Target) Amendment Regulations 2023 [draft] be approved.

