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Sent: Wednesday, April 23, 2008 5:48 PM
Subject: Climate Change Bill: CTC Scotland response

CTC is the national association of cyclists, a membership organisation with around 2500 members in Scotland.

CTC Right-to-Ride is the campaigning arm of CTC and has its own (voluntary) organisation for Scotland.

As many have now pointed out, and as the proposed Bill makes clear, climate change is THE biggest challenge we face to our way of life and our future, and has to be taken as seriously as possible. Most of the emissions over the past 50 years have been the responsibility of the developed world, and it is now our duty to face up to these responsibilities and take action to reduce our emissions, in accord with the principles of 'contraction and convergence' outlined more than 10 years ago by the IPCC, under which a goal of global fairness is achieved through contraction by the developed world while allowing the underdeveloped nations some increase in emissions ('convergence'). Scotland is at present living three times beyond its means, ie beyond what is sustainable in the long term. To achieve sustainability, changes to our current lifestyle are inevitable and politicians will have to take the lead in introducing them.

Many members of the public are now aware of climate change and how serious it is. We are waiting for the Government, and governments, to take action. We know that what has been done so far to mitigate climate change is pitifully inadequate.

In the transport sector cycling is uniquely placed to offer a solution to climate change. It is a mode of transport which is free of emissions yet offers a door-to-door service. It is particularly suitable for short journeys and can be used for most purposes within towns and cities, including shopping, travel to school and work and travel to leisure and other amenities. For longer distances the bicycle can be used in conjunction with public transport for one or both ends of the door-to-door service. Cycling is also the healthy option, offering regular and steady daily exercise which is potentially stress-relieving, in total contrast to the car, which engenders a sedentary and stressful lifestyle in an air quality which research has shown is more polluted, in cities, than the outside air breathed by cyclists.

There are numerous other benefits, including the facts that it is benign (doesn't kill or injure people), that it relieves traffic congestion, improves air quality, requires minimal or no land-take for parking, and is highly convenient and versatile - all in contrast to the private car.

The city of Edinburgh has shown, over recent years, that pro-cycling policies can work, and that given the right conditions and some encouragement, people can and will cycle to school, to work, to the shops etc. Informal surveys by the campaign group 'Spokes' in the city have shown that cycles comprise between 15 and 20% of all traffic on key roads at peak periods, and that the vast majority of these cyclists are commuters. So it can be done in Scotland, but only if real efforts are made to achieve it.

We believe there are three principles which the Scottish Government must establish if a Climate Change Bill is to succeed in reducing emissions significantly:

1) the Government must establish the environment as the number one priority in policy making, and put it before the economy. The Stern Review made it clear that if we do not do this, the economic costs will eventually be far greater;

2) all major development proposals must be submitted to an audit of their environmental impact, including the environmental cost of the development itself (eg the energy requirements), and a realistic assessment of the subsequent impacts during operation, including likely emissions;

3) every sector of Government must play its part in reducing emissions, which means there must be more joined-up thinking within the Government to ensure that the good work achieved in one sector is not undone by unsustainable projects in others.

We also believe, in agreement with the proposals in the consultation, that it is important not just to reduce emissions, but to be seen to be doing so by the rest of the world. Since we are responsible for most of the emissions, we must send out a clear message that we are serious in our efforts, and avoid the impression of a Bill which is 'window-dressing'.

We agree that a target, as suggested, of an 80% reduction in emissions by 2050 is acceptable and should be regarded as a minimum. We also believe however that interim targets must be set and that significant reductions must be sought right now, because governments have a bad reputation for not achieving targets, and it would be all too easy to regard 2050 as a long way off and part of the next generation. The measurement of emissions, and their reduction, must include aviation both national and international, all other vehicular transport, and shipping.

The transport sector

Emissions from transport are currently around 25% of total emissions, and, worryingly, this proportion, as well as emissions themselves, are rising. The transport policies of the present Government give no sign of taking account of climate change - quite the opposite; for example, of the 9 national projects singled out in the National Planning Framework, not one is sustainable. A budget of £3177m has been allocated for road-building over the next three years, compared with much lesser sums for public transport, and the £33m for sustainable transport, of which only a proportion will be spent on cycling.

We believe these 'predict and provide' policies for car use are outmoded. All other European countries with developed economies are putting resources into public transport and integrated transport, in which cycling plays a real and significant role. The result is towns and cities which function better, are less congested, and more pleasant and healthy places to live.

The justification for the roads programme is always "the economy", but there has never been hard evidence of the economic benefits that more roads are claimed to bring, nor has there been a realistic assessment of the disbenefits to counter the

economic claims. The public are rapidly coming to realise that building new roads not only does not relieve traffic congestion, except in the very short term, but quickly makes it worse. A recent YouGov poll, for example, showed only 30% of respondents wanted more roads, while 72% wanted better public transport.

If the impetus for the roads programme is coming from the business sector, then they must be challenged to produce evidence of the benefits for congestion and for the economy. Crucially, this evidence must be based on the outcomes of previous roads projects. At present, the assessment of benefits is done only by somewhat fanciful projections from Transport Scotland, who put into their STAG appraisals only the data that will show a cost benefit, and none of the evidence of traffic induction (increase) experienced from existing road projects. They would also need to explain why, for example, the economy of Glasgow, a conurbation honeycombed with motorways, is not vastly more powerful than that of Edinburgh, whose nearest motorway is 6 miles away.

These arguments were all aired during the Public Inquiry into the M74 Extension in 2006. The Report concluded that this road would worsen congestion rather than alleviate it, that the claims for the economy and job creation were greatly exaggerated, and that the road did not represent value for money. The then Ministers overturned the Report's conclusions, without justification for doing so, and in defiance of all principles of democracy. It seems the present Government has learnt nothing from the Report, and is continuing with the same policies despite all rational argument to the contrary. One is entitled to ask what's going on.

The present Government's transport policies also include airport expansion. Even current levels of air travel are unsustainable, and aviation is the worst possible mode for emissions, not just because of quantity but also location. A sustainable policy would seek to replace internal air travel with rail, a mode which is much more sustainable and in most cases offers comparable journey times if measured door-to-door.

For these reasons we believe the Government's transport priorities are completely misguided. The result can only be more cars on the road, more planes in the air, and journeys of ever greater distances. The policies could be summed up as 'mobility without responsibility'. If we are serious about climate change one thing we must learn is to travel less, to travel more slowly, and by more sustainable modes. The Government's over-riding aim of 'cutting journey times' belongs in the past.

The other consequence of these policies is the image we send to the rest of the world. Nine national projects, all of them unsustainable. A massive road building programme coupled with expansion in the aviation sector. No indication that integrated public transport, and cycling, have any priority. The message of 'business as usual', and that we are not serious about climate change, except to talk about it, could not be clearer.

In view of the above, it is disturbing that the Climate Change Bill has almost nothing to say about transport. We would expect a whole section of Chapter 8, 'Supporting Measures', to be devoted to transport and the role it must play in reducing emissions. Instead, we get just a brief mention in section 8.1, which merely suggests we all do

more walking and cycling and using public transport. This is hardly likely to happen, when Government policies are doing everything possible to encourage us to drive.

By contrast, investment in cycling offers excellent value for money, as well as zero carbon emissions. 50% of all car trips are less than 2 miles, and 75% less than 5 miles. These are distances which could easily be cycled - and which WERE cycled, before the advent of cheap cars and cheap fuel. People are deterred from cycling by a combination of heavy and fast traffic, poor-quality road surfaces, and off-road routes which are badly maintained.

We call for a national programme to set up good-quality cycle networks in all Scottish towns and cities, and a target of 20% of all journeys by bicycle by 2020. That would be a significant contribution towards reduction of emissions.

In summary, if a Climate Change Bill is to have a hope of real success, and achieve year-on-year reductions in emissions, then the transport sector must be brought on board. We have suggested that all schemes, and especially road projects, be examined in full, including not just the traditional STAG cost-benefit analyses, which are flawed and biased in favour, but also the consequences for the environment in the wider sense, for increased congestion, for poorer health, and for the 'business as usual' message these projects convey.

We suggest that Ch. 8 of the document should include a whole section on transport, or possibly a chapter to itself, raising all the above issues, and promoting a full and open discussion among all parties.

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CTC Right-to-Ride Scotland

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