

## **Our policies for the environment**

From the litter on our streets to the quality of the air that we breathe, the environment affects each and every one of us. It is therefore in all our interests to look after our local environment, and make our contribution to creating a Scotland and wider world that is clean, green and sustainable.

The SNP is committed to taking action at global and national level, and encouraging and enabling individuals to play their part in protecting our environment.

### **Global action**

Problems like pollution and climate change know no national boundaries, and can only be tackled by a concerted effort from all the nations of the world.

In Scotland, we should be playing our part in tackling these problems. Yet Scotland's per capita greenhouse gas emissions are the fourth highest in Europe. And, despite our potential to become Europe's renewables powerhouse, emissions from electricity generation have increased by 18 per cent since 1990

The SNP is committed to reducing the emission of greenhouse gases, and we will adopt targets agreed as part of the Kyoto Protocol. An SNP government will climate change proof our policies, and implement a climate change policy incorporating ambitious targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, a non-nuclear energy policy that promotes renewables, an energy efficiency strategy, and support for the research and development of clean technologies.

With Independence we will use our voice on the international stage to

urge other nations to play their part in a truly global challenge.

### **National action**

Although environmental targets and strategies must be global, efforts to tackle environmental problems will be implemented by individual nations. Scotland must have a clear and ambitious strategy to protect and enhance our national and global environment.

### **Sustainability**

We recognise the potential impact economic growth has on the planet's finite resources, which is why we aim to make our economic policies as sustainable as possible.

We will develop a green jobs strategy for Scotland, based on the enormous potential of renewable energy and waste management to contribute to our economy.

### **Renewable energy**

Scotland has 25 per cent of Europe's wind and tidal capacity and 10 per cent of its wave power. There are huge untapped opportunities for offshore energy production.

Indeed, the opportunities offshore for these technologies dwarf the potential for onshore wind development. In many parts of Scotland, large scale onshore projects encounter understandable public concern. That is why the overwhelming bulk of wind developments should be offshore like the thousand mega-watt development in the Beatrice oil field.

Onshore developments should be community based and have clear community benefits. This is why the SNP is committed to the creation of community-based local renewable energy sources, thereby giving communities real ownership of developments on their doorstep.

We will increase research and development investment in renewable energy technologies to harness Scotland's immense renewables potential and turn it into a profitable and environmentally sustainable industry. The SNP wants to see Scotland producing at least 50% of our electricity from renewable sources by 2020.

Scotland's future energy needs must be met through the development of safe, sustainable and clean sources of power.

However the UK government wants to impose discriminatory energy charges, which threaten the future of all Scottish energy producers. The Energy Act establishes a new regime for electricity generators who wish to sell their electricity on the National Grid. The system is based on proximity to population centres rather than generating potential, meaning that generators in remote parts of Scotland are charged more than producers in the south. The SNP will oppose these discriminatory charges - but we need Independence to guarantee a healthy future for Scotland's renewable energy industry.

Scotland's renewable energy resources must be developed responsibly - which necessitates a clear strategic planning framework within which proposals can be assessed. Resistance from local communities to new developments often stems from a feeling of powerlessness in the decision-making process. We will therefore develop new guidelines to ensure that Local Authorities proactively designate sites as acceptable or otherwise for the erection of, for example, wind turbines. In particular, developments must be sensitive to the surrounding environment and communities. We will also investigate the introduction of

a third party right of appeal, under certain circumstances.

Scotland's renewable energy potential is vast and also diverse. The SNP is committed to developing a balanced mix of renewable resources, which incorporates wind, tidal, hydro, solar and biomass technologies. Each has a role to play in providing Scotland's future energy requirements.

### **Energy efficiency**

In addition to addressing energy production in Scotland, we also have to address the issue of energy consumption. In order to reduce our energy consumption, combat fuel poverty and meet our environmental targets, it is vital that we become more energy efficient.

We will implement a national energy efficiency strategy, which will include ambitious domestic and commercial energy efficiency targets. We will aim for a 40% improvement in energy efficiency by 2020.

We will also introduce higher standards of building construction and insulation methods in all sectors. And we will ensure that all major public construction projects incorporate energy efficiency design elements.

### **A nuclear-free Scotland**

The SNP is committed to a nuclear-free Scotland. On Independence we will negotiate the safe removal of Trident from Scotland and an independent Scotland will work to eliminate nuclear, biological and chemical weapons world-wide. Pre-independence we will continue to be part of the coalition against Trident in the UK.

Because we are committed to producing energy in a cleaner way, the SNP will oppose any new nuclear power stations in Scotland. Although the continued use of nuclear power to

produce energy is not sustainable, acceptable or economically viable, Labour seems intent on commissioning new nuclear power stations in Scotland. With Independence, an SNP government will not only ensure that no new nuclear power stations are built in Scotland, but that existing facilities are decommissioned at the end of their economic or technical life.

### **A GM-free Scotland**

The introduction of genetically-modified (GM) crops to Scotland would undermine the reputation of Scottish farming and fly in the face of public opinion. It would introduce a product which consumers do not want. It would also threaten Scotland's reputation for a high quality natural environment.

Once the GM genie is out of the bottle, it cannot be put back. The damage is irreversible. Releasing genetically modified materials into the environment could have long-term health implications and devastating environmental consequences. The SNP believes that the risk of pollution is too high, and the risk to our high quality reputation in the agricultural sector is too great. The SNP will therefore respect the precautionary principle and introduce a moratorium on GM crop trials in Scotland, unless and until such time as the safety of genetic modification procedures and their crops have been established.

### **Waste**

We need to move away from a throwaway society and reduce the amount of waste we produce. There will come a time when we simply run out of places to dump our ever-increasing piles of waste. So, continuing to dispose of our waste in landfill sites is not a sustainable option.

The SNP is committed to implementing a waste strategy centred around waste minimisation, re-use and recycling – with ambitious targets for each. With Independence, we could ensure that the proceeds raised from the Landfill Tax are used to support alternative methods of dealing with Scotland's waste, including recycling and re-use schemes.

### **Forestry**

We will maximise the environmental benefits of Scotland's forestry, which can help combat climate change. As a carbon sink, extensive forestry cover can help prevent a build up of this dangerous greenhouse gas. There are also significant opportunities for Scottish forestry in the development of biomass renewable energy schemes – particularly the use of wood fuel to generate heat technologies.

### **Local action**

Our actions at local level have a huge impact on our immediate surroundings, but also the wider environment. We all have a responsibility to play our part in protecting the environment, to enhance our quality of life and that of our children and grandchildren. A healthy environment contributes to the health of all who live in our communities.

### **Sustainable communities**

The SNP is committed to making it as easy as possible for people to do their bit for environment, but it is also the responsibility of individuals to make the most of these opportunities.

We are committed to making these tasks easier, through, for example, the provision of more recycling services and facilities. We will also support the introduction of greater separation at

source for domestic waste through kerbside collection.

We want to engender a culture where our citizens act as stewards of our natural resources and the wider environment. Environmental awareness will therefore be an important component of our proposed citizenship classes in schools, which are aimed teaching young people the rights and responsibilities that come with citizenship.

### **Changing behaviour**

We will draw on best practice from other countries to provide incentives for individuals to take responsibility for the environmental consequences of their behaviour.

In Norway, for example, the government and packaging industry have come together to promote the recycling of drinks cartons through a lottery initiative in which the winner is drawn from recycled cartons containing the contact details of consumers. This has helped Norway to achieve a 60 per cent recycling rate for milk and juice cartons.

We will also look at initiatives such as the Rotterdam NU smart card which awards points for the purchase of certain goods and services, and the recycling of household waste. Points can be redeemed to purchase other sustainable goods and services.

We will work with consumers, producers and communities to develop similar projects for Scotland and turn our aspiration for sustainable communities into reality.



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