



**Friends of  
the Earth**

November, 2022

# 12 STEP PROGRAMME

## FOR BOLD CLIMATE ACTION



Image taken at the cost of living march, Dublin, 24th September 2022

# INTRODUCTION :

The Government will publish a new Climate Action Plan in the coming weeks. It is the first one under the 2021 climate law and the first one since the Dáil adopted a binding limit on national emissions for the period 2021 to 2025 and the Government divided that “carbon budget” into sectoral emissions ceilings in July.

But Irish emissions are rising again after Covid. Only bold action will do now if we are going to keep our commitments. The time for half-measures and baby steps is long past. It’s an emergency and the Government needs to start acting like it. As UN scientists put it earlier this year we need “rapid, deep and immediate” cuts to polluting emissions.

Friends of the Earth has developed a 12 Step Programme for government to urgently cut pollution and reduce energy costs for households. Now we need as many people as possible to talk to their TDs about the need for bold climate action before the Government makes big decisions in a few weeks time. The more we raise our voices the better the chance of the action we need.

# 12 STEPS

## for **bold** climate action

Here's the list of steps broken down into the four big emissions sectors: transport, buildings, electricity and agriculture. And then we have 3 steps on "cultural transformation". Below that is more information on each of them. At the bottom of this document there are links to additional resources if you want background supporting information.

### Transport: Break our dependence on private cars and oil for mobility



**1** Cycling, walking and buses to school



**2** More, cheaper public transport



**3** EV loans in rural Ireland, congestion charges in Dublin



**4** No new fossil fuel cars from 2026

### Agriculture and land use: Reduce chemical fertilizer, ramp up peatland rewetting



**5** Reduce chemical fertilizers



**6** Rewet peat soils

### Buildings: Keep people warm and break our dependence on fossil fuel heating



**7** Insulate people from fossil fuel prices



**8** Get off gas



**9** Transform social housing

### Electricity: Ramp up renewables, reduce demand and guarantee basic needs



**10** A solar sprint



**11** No more data centres



**12** A right to energy

# 3 STEPS

## for a **cultural transformation**



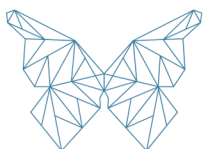
### **BAN FOSSIL FUEL ADVERTISING**

Ban ads for fossil fuels, ads from companies or public bodies involved in fossil fuel production or distribution and ads about cars, boilers or flights that use fossil fuels.



### **A PUBLIC INFORMATION CAMPAIGN**

Develop and launch a comprehensive long-term Government information campaign on climate and energy, as we have done on road safety and smoking over decades ads



### **PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE DIETS**

Mandate the Food Safety Authority of Ireland to revise their “Healthy Eating Guidelines” to take into account the water, air and climate pollution impacts of different food types.

*“We need to treat pollution like we treat smoking”*

# TRANSPORT :

## Break our dependence on private cars and oil for mobility

### **Cycling, walking and buses to school**

Make it possible, safe and convenient for every child to go to school without using a car by September 2023

- Guaranteeing a free school bus place for all children who live more than 1km away from school. Invest in a fleet of electric buses and mini-buses.
- Building safe routes to school for cycling and walking within a 3km radius of every school.
- Closing more school streets to cars and use one way systems to make arrival at school on bike and foot as safe as possible and ban engine idling near schools.

### **More, cheaper public transport**

The reductions in public transport fares have been popular in Ireland, but Germany's €9-a-month scheme was a runaway success. Trial a similar scheme here for 6 months. Meanwhile, accelerate the roll out of Bus Connects and develop a rural transport plan based on a vision of "every village, every hour".

### **EV loans in rural Ireland, congestion charges in Dublin**

Immediately introduce a state-backed interest-free loan for rural households to buy EVs. Get the most polluting cars, especially SUVs, off our city streets as soon as possible. Introduce a congestion charge in Dublin immediately that escalates by emissions and weight and extend it to other urban areas as more public transport comes on stream.

### **No new fossil fuel cars from 2026**

End the sale of new internal combustion engines (ICE) cars within 3 years. Start by immediately raising VRT on cars based on emissions and weight, so that the highest band is at €5,000 by 2025. Ban the sale of new ICE cars from 2026.

# AGRICULTURE AND LAND USE :

## Reduce chemical fertilizer, ramp up peatland rewetting

### **Reduce chemical fertilizers**

The key to reducing air, water and climate pollution from agriculture is reducing the use of chemical nitrogen fertilizer, which grew 28% after 2010 to 408,000 tonnes a year. It's fallen this year due to the skyrocketing price of the fossil fuels used to make it. The Government must ensure that chemical fertilizer use does not rise again in 2023 or 2024 and falls to 2010 levels no later than 2025, and continues to decline steadily to less than 200,000 tonnes by 2030.

### **Rewet peat soils**

Reward landowners for active maintenance of ecosystems, including rewetting of agricultural peatlands

# BUILDINGS :

Keep people warm and break our dependence on fossil fuel heating

## **Insulate people from fossil fuel prices**

Insulate 100,000 homes in 2023, prioritising cheaper measures that save energy and money quickly. The focus must be on reaching those most at risk of energy poverty and those who rely on coal and turf. Don't wait for them to apply to SEAI for a grant, sit down with the likes of the SVP and Age Action to plan a coordinated outreach campaign offering wrap-around supports for retrofitting.

## **Get off gas**

Ban fossil fuel boilers in new buildings in 2023. Ban the further expansion of the gas distribution network from 2024. Ban the sale of new fossil gas boilers for any building by 2028. Phase out fossil fuel boilers in existing buildings, prioritising residential homes, by 2033. Ensure that everyone has access to alternative low-carbon heating options.

## **Transform social housing**

Retrofit and install fossil-free heating in all social housing stock to B2, and install solar PV on all feasible social housing units, by 2030.

# ELECTRICITY:

Ramp up renewables,  
reduce demand and  
guarantee basic needs

## **A solar sprint**

Deploy 2GW of solar PV in the next 18 months. We have the technical expertise and we have the open fields. If the current support scheme isn't delivering the state should step in and procure the panels directly, just like it did with medical PPE during the Covid emergency.

## **No more data centres**

Introduce a moratorium on new data centres connecting to the electricity grid until electricity system pressures and gas lock-in risks are transparently and comprehensively addressed.

## **A right to energy**

Examine the idea of a "Basic Energy Guarantee" as proposed by the New Economics Foundation in the UK and Age Action in Ireland. Every household would get a basic allowance of electricity and gas, at a low rate for everyone and free for older people and welfare recipients. Usage at above that level would be at the very high market rates or more. Aim to have this in place by October 2023.





## **Other Useful Resources**

- Friends of the Earth (2022). Our full organisational submission to the Climate Action Plan 2023 consultation is [available online here to view/pillage/ignore :-\)](#).
- Friends of the Earth (2022). 5 point plan for Government to cut bills, save energy and reduce pollution. Available at: [https://www.foe.ie/assets/files/pdf/5\\_point\\_plan\\_to\\_cut\\_bills\\_save\\_energy\\_and\\_reduce\\_pollution\\_-\\_may\\_2022.pdf](https://www.foe.ie/assets/files/pdf/5_point_plan_to_cut_bills_save_energy_and_reduce_pollution_-_may_2022.pdf)
- Joint Letter on Energy Poverty (2022). Available at: [https://www.foe.ie/assets/files/pdf/joint\\_letter\\_on\\_energy\\_poverty\\_and\\_energy\\_pollution.pdf](https://www.foe.ie/assets/files/pdf/joint_letter_on_energy_poverty_and_energy_pollution.pdf)
- Friends of the Earth (2022) An examination of blockages to retrofitting and heat-pump installation in Ireland. Available at: [https://www.foe.ie/assets/files/pdf/blockages\\_to\\_retrofitting\\_and\\_heat-pump\\_installation\\_in\\_ireland.pdf](https://www.foe.ie/assets/files/pdf/blockages_to_retrofitting_and_heat-pump_installation_in_ireland.pdf)
- EPA Inventory Report (2022) Ireland's National Inventory Report 2022 - Greenhouse Gas Emissions 1990-2020. Available at: [https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring--assessment/climate-change/air-emissions/Ireland-NIR-2022\\_Merge\\_v2..pdf](https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring--assessment/climate-change/air-emissions/Ireland-NIR-2022_Merge_v2..pdf)
- MaREI and ISEA (2022) Quantifying the potential for rooftop solar photovoltaic in Ireland. Available at: <https://www.marei.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Quantifying-the-Potential-for-Rooftop-Solar-Photovoltaic-in-Ireland.pdf>