



**Friends of  
the Earth**

## Ireland Needs an Energy Revolution Friends of the Earth Action Plan, May 2015

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### **Our vision**

Our vision is of a fossil fuel free Ireland by 2050.

An Ireland where nobody is dependent on fossil fuels for a warm home, a mobile life or affordable electricity.

An Ireland where everybody has the chance to own the renewable energy developments that will power our lives, and to participate in the decisions that get us there.

### **Our Campaign**

Internationally, Friends of the Earth is running a [“We Are The Energy Revolution”](#) campaign with the following demands:

- Ensure justice for people affected by climate change.
- Stop fossil fuels and other dirty energy, while protecting workers in these areas.
- Support community-owned renewable energy – giving people the power, not corporations.

### **The White Paper and Beyond**

To achieve the transition to an energy system that is secure, environmentally sustainable and affordable for all, the forthcoming White Paper should set “Fossil Fuel Free” as the clear, long term and overarching Vision for Irish energy policy.

This 2050 Vision will help ensure that all short term actions are in line with the achievement of this goal. Developing indigenous, renewable energy resources should be a priority to reduce the €7bn annual transfer out of Ireland to import fossil fuels, and ensure a successful transition to a low carbon economy by 2050.

### **A Six Point Action Plan for a Fossil Fuel Free Ireland by 2050**

- 1. Energy Efficiency First.** Develop a national retrofit plan to reduce energy demand in buildings with a national target of moving the average Building Energy Rating from D1 currently to B1 by 2030.
- 2. Ramp up Renewables.** Increase renewable generation with a target of 100% renewable heat and electricity by 2040, and increase flexibility within these networks to accommodate variable renewable supplies.
- 3. Phase out Fossil Fuels.** Start by ending subsidies. Target the most polluting first. Phase out peat (as PSO support expires) and coal (do not extend Moneypoint past 2025) for electricity, and ban fracking.
- 4. Empower Energy Citizens** to engage with the energy choices we have available to us and the costs and opportunities associated with the energy decisions we make.
- 5. Promote Citizen Ownership of Renewable Energy** through community ownership and co-ownership of renewable energy generation and energy conservation initiatives.
- 6. Support Sustainable Transport** with smart travel and development planning and incentives for electric vehicles, ensuring that we travel less and travel smarter.

- 1. Energy Efficiency First.** Develop a national retrofit plan to reduce energy demand in buildings with a national target of moving the average Building Energy Rating from D1 currently to B1 by 2030.
  - a) A tax and subsidy package that encourages investment in retrofit, including an SSIA-style scheme for homeowners.
  - b) A retail bank administered loan facility subsidised for non-fuel poverty citizens to undertake energy retrofit and upgrades to buildings at low interest rates.
  - c) The use European Investment Bank funding, exchequer funds and EU Structural funds for fuel poverty elimination through retrofit rather than fossil fuel subsidies.
  
- 2. Ramp up Renewables.** Increase renewable generation with a target of 100% renewable heat and electricity by 2040, and increase flexibility within these networks to accommodate variable renewable supplies.  
Renewable Energy - Wind, Solar, Marine and Bio-energy should be maximised through steady and clear policy signals.
  - a) Set ambitious national renewable targets for every 5 years to achieve 100% renewable heat and electricity by 2040.
  - b) Support solar electricity equally with other renewable technologies with a feed in tariff or otherwise to ensure solar electricity generators get paid for their power.
  - c) Invest in district heating networks to i) use waste heat from power plants and industry, ii) convert renewable electricity to heat and thermal storage iii) use less fuel by sharing a common boiler instead of the approximately 2 million individual heat boilers<sup>1</sup>.
  - d) Improve interconnection, storage, load shifting and smart grid investment to ensure we maximise the use of use variable renewable resources.
  - e) The EU renewable energy targets should not be seen as a cap on renewable energy.
  
- 3. Phase out Fossil Fuels.** Start by ending subsidies. Target the most polluting first. Phase out peat (as PSO support expires) and coal (do not extend Moneypoint past 2025) and ban fracking.
  - a) Phase out the inefficient burning of peat (as PSO contracts expire i.e Edenderry 2015?, West Offaly and Loch Ree 2019). Prohibit the practice of co-firing as a means of securing financial support for burning peat.
  - b) Shut down the coal power plant Moneypoint before it reaches the end of its useable life in 2025.
  - c) Dis-incentivise the use of fossil fuels in domestic heating and incentivise renewable alternatives i) outlaw the purchase and installation of new oil boilers for heating immediately ii) promote wood and biomass over coal and peat in home heating (tax and subsidy approach) iii) phase out new gas boilers for home heating iv) replace boilers with heat pumps in rural areas and district heating networks in urban areas.
  - d) Ban fracking. Extend the de-facto moratorium on fracking formally and indefinitely.

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<sup>1</sup> Connolly, D – calculates that 37% of Irish heat demand for buildings can be converted to district heating (15% in small towns, 22% in large cities). Heat would be supplied by CHP with thermal storage and peak load boilers. For rural areas, air/ground source heat pumps should replace oil/gas boilers.

- 4. Empower Energy Citizens** to engage with the energy choices we have available to us and the costs and opportunities associated with the energy decisions we make. Without significantly more public understanding and engagement with the challenges and opportunities we face, citizens will not support the required changes in expenditure, infrastructure and taxation to implement the transition to a sustainable energy system.
- a) Undertake wider regional consultation on energy policy as part of the white paper and beyond.
  - b) Commission public service broadcasting on the energy transition.
  - c) Require public participation in local energy policy and mandate Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategies (LARES) for every county.
- 5. Promote Citizen Ownership of Renewable Energy** through community ownership and co-ownership of renewable energy generation and energy conservation initiatives.
- a) Make a clear statement to support an increase in community ownership and co-ownership of renewable energy developments, including a target for community ownership and a requirement for local co-ownership of all developments.
  - b) Make a commitment to overcome the barriers to the development of community led renewable energy projects (in particular, ensure community energy groups can access the national grid, develop intermediary bodies to provide support and information services to community groups with a mechanism to provide start up funding support).
  - c) Develop a tax incentive for small scale investment in renewable energy (urban, rural, domestic and small commercial).
  - d) Incentivise an increase in micro generation through the application of a simplified feed in process and support mechanism with payments for exporting surplus electricity to the grid.
- 6. Support Sustainable Transport** with smart travel and development planning and incentives for electric vehicles, ensuring that we travel less and travel smarter.
- a) Ensure smarter travel planning is a core element of development planning, ensuring that we travel less and have sustainable travel choices available as an alternative to using the car.
  - b) Develop and implement a national plan to roll out electric car charging points to every car park, public building and service station by 2016.
  - c) Define targets for the numbers of electric vehicles on the road every year between now and 2030, with continued incentives for switching to EV for public, private and commercial use.
- (Note: it takes 1 kW of installed capacity to supply the average electric Irish car for one year. 1 GW of installed capacity will power all cars in Ireland for 20 years)