

# DÁIL ÉIREANN

---

## AN COMHCHOISTE UM GHNÍOMHÚ AR SON NA HAERÁIDE

### JOINT COMMITTEE ON CLIMATE ACTION

---

*Déardaoin, 28 Márta 2019*

*Thursday, 28 March 2019*

---

The Joint Committee met at 2 p.m.

---

#### MEMBERS PRESENT:

Deputy Colm Brophy,*	Senator Paul Daly,
Deputy Mary Butler,	Senator Máire Devine,
Deputy Jack Chambers,	Senator Tim Lombard,
Deputy Marcella Corcoran Kennedy,	Senator Ian Marshall,
Deputy Timmy Dooley,	Senator Michelle Mulherin,
Deputy Martin Heydon,	Senator Grace O'Sullivan.
Deputy Imelda Munster,	
Deputy Tom Neville,	
Deputy Thomas Pringle,	
Deputy Eamon Ryan,	
Deputy Sean Sherlock,	
Deputy Bríd Smith,	
Deputy Brian Stanley,	

\* In the absence of Deputy Pat Deering.

DEPUTY HILDEGARDE NAUGHTON IN THE CHAIR.

### **Third Report of Citizens' Assembly: Discussion (Resumed)**

**Chairman:** Before we complete the committee's report, we will hear from five students each of whom will make a two-minute presentation to give us a youth perspective on the need for climate action. The schools represented before us this afternoon are Sancta Maria college, Louisburgh; Crana college, Buncrana; County Donegal; Temple Carrig school, Greystones, Cork Educate Together secondary school; and Newpark comprehensive in Blackrock.

Our first contributor this afternoon is Mr. Theo Cullen-Mouze.

**Mr. Theo Cullen-Mouze:** I have grown up on a farm on Clare Island in County Mayo. Our offshore community has seen the evidence of climate change in a very real and frightening way. I thank the committee for inviting us here to speak today and I thank the committee members for their work on combatting climate change. They are taking the first steps in the right direction.

The unfortunate truth, however, is that even though progress is being made and even though Irish politicians have largely been supportive of the climate strikes, we are still not doing enough. The committee's report is definitely a step in the right direction but we cannot afford to only take steps anymore, we need to make a leap. Even if every one of the recommendations outlined by the committee were to be implemented by the Government, we would still fall short of our targets. Perhaps not our official, internationally agreed-upon ones, but our moral and ethical ones.

Ireland is a prosperous developed nation which is heralded throughout Europe as an example of how globalisation can benefit peripheral states in the 21st century. In recent years, Ireland has undergone progressive social change. I am proud to call myself Irish because of this. However, what use is a more progressive, fairer society, if society itself ceases to exist? This is not an over-dramatisation of the facts. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, IPCC, report from last year is quite clear. If we do not act now, my generation and the generations to come will suffer.

Additionally, I find the repeated appeals by this committee to highlight the positive benefits of climate action, rather than the negative consequences of inaction to be quite surprising and indeed dispiriting. Climate action does indeed have benefits, benefits which will doubtlessly exceed the cost. It is vital that we do not forget why we need climate action.

One of the main reasons we are in the desperate situation that we are in now is because of the apathy and a general lack of awareness surrounding the issue. Do not for a second think that we are not in a desperate situation. It is vital that we communicate this to the public. Trying to obscure this fact is not only deceptive, it is downright irresponsible. Today our generation is saying that we demand politicians stop taking baby steps. Take a leap instead. Lead us to the future we deserve. Ireland and the planet cannot afford to wait. It is time to stop playing politics with our future.

**Chairman:** I thank Mr. Cullen-Mouze. I call on Ms Sumaya Mohammed now.

**Ms Sumaya Mohammed:** Hi. I am 12 years old and a first year student in Cork Educate Together secondary school.

I am not in any way capable of representing more than 15,000 students in the Republic of

Ireland and I am not a professional speaker. I am not here to bore my listeners with my life story. The politicians present grew up worrying about what jobs they would get, how they would do in exams and who they would fall in love with. We grow up worrying about the same things, but on top of that, we have the worry about how long we have left to live. We, as students here, should be enjoying life, having carefree thoughts and not worrying about the future of the world. Yet we are here telling politicians how to do their job.

The root of the problem is greed and money being allowed to rule. We know that Earth has already warmed by 1.1°C since the industrial revolution. Politicians continue to look at us and say that they are proud of us, but the moment they walk out of this room, the fact that they do not do anything makes us wonder if they are thinking of their image more than they are thinking of us. To the Dáil and all of the politicians, we say we are beyond furious. We should not have to be doing this and giving up one of our basic human rights, education, in order to clean up the politicians' mess. It should not come down to just having 11 years to drastically change what is happening to the earth. Politicians give us compliments on how amazing it is that school-children are standing up for their futures and said that they were inspired and enthused. Their compliments are worthless to us without actions. We signed up to the Paris Agreement, which by the looks of it, everyone has forgotten.

We are Europe's laggards and it should not be that way. Those politicians who have children love them more than anything else. Like Greta Thunberg said, these politicians are stealing their futures right in front of their very eyes. They are stealing my future and have absolutely no right to do that. I am sorry if this gives offence to any of the politicians present here in any way but they must face the reality. They are not realising that their greed and delay is harming our very existence or that if we fail there is no "undo" button. If we are capable of changing the climate, then we are definitely capable of fixing this mess. The IPCC's latest science report in October 2018 said that the next ten years will be the most important years in history. I hope the politicians make that count.

**Chairman:** I thank Ms Mohammed and call now on Ms Mollie Gordon-Bolles to give her presentation.

**Ms Molly Gordon-Bolles:** I am a 17-year-old student and climate activist from Temple Carrig School in Greystones. I am here to talk about what climate change means to us, as students, and about what needs to be done. My future and that of my children and my grandchildren depend entirely on what is done now, not what is said, promised or proposed, as empty promises do not change anything. The only thing that changes the world is action. The Earth cannot hear one's words. It cannot tell one what to do or feel one's confusion or denial on the topic.

I will be a voter soon like many other young people so the politicians need to listen to their electorate. There is such a blindness when it comes to climate change. People have this mentality that if it is not affecting them it does not matter. I hope it does not come down to another global disaster like the recent cyclone in Mozambique for actions to take place. This is only one example of the consequences of climate change. Our actions have affected the lives of 1.85 million Mozambicans, caused the death of more than 500 vulnerable people, destroyed more than 33,000 houses, damaged 500,000 ha of crops, and devastated families. Yet nothing is being done and we only have 11 and a half years before climate change becomes irreversible.

Climate change is not just a problem or issue for politicians or adults to tackle. It is not a problem that young people should be stuck with dealing with alone. We need every single hu-

man on earth to recognise that this is an emergency, and to do that we need to declare one. We are told that action is taking place, and even paper straws come in plastic packaging. Agriculture, energy and transport industries accounted for 72.5% of greenhouse gas emissions in 2015. For 2020, Ireland was given a target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 20% below what they were in 2005. We are currently on target to reduce emissions by less than 1% come 2020. This is going to result in over €600 million in fines.

One may think that hope is lost, that we pushed it aside for too long, but that only makes the problem worse. We must accept that this is happening and we need to do something about it now. I thank the committee.

**Chairman:** I thank Ms Gordon-Bolles. We will hear now from Conal O'Boyle.

**Mr. Conal O'Boyle:** Hello. I am 16 years of age and from Muff in County Donegal. My brother Seán and I made the journey from Donegal to be here this week. We needed to cross the Border twice and there is uncertainty as to what that Border is going to look like. It is not the change of accent, or even the Union Jack colours painted on the kerbs, that lets one know to that one is in Northern Ireland. It is the solar panels, the windmills and the progressive infrastructure that really lets one know where one is.

Some 30 years ago it would not have been possible to travel with such ease. Now, as Brexit looms, we are hoping that what we are saying today is not drowned out by the terms - backstop, common travel area or trade union. We hear enough about that where we live in Muff. In the past number of years it seems that everything has been about Brexit and nothing has been about climate change, which I can tell all those present is far more important than Brexit.

The reality is that there is no progressive infrastructure in the north west that I can see and I am sure this is a reflection on the rest of the country. We want this progressive infrastructure which is physical and eye-catching. We want windmills, solar panels, houses to be retrofitted, and to see an Ireland that will be carbon neutral by 2030.

We need more free public transport. I saw a picture on Twitter recently that showed the train systems of the world's major cities: Paris, New York and London with of all the lines that zigzagged each other; it was impossible to keep up with it. There was then a diagram of Dublin. It showed one green line and one red line, with a black dotted line in between them saying: "you can walk yourself". I know that is a bit outdated but I am sure the committee understands the point I am trying to make.

About six years ago I was at the Red Cross centre in Muff, which was previously a customs post, when a Red Cross leader, Mr. Bernie Rutherford, told us that children who were then three years old were the last generation who could do anything before it was out of human hands. My brother was that age at that time and he is nine years old today. Bernie's message has stayed with me through him. We hope the message sent on 15 March by more than 10,000 young people on Molesworth Street, more than 15,000 people nationwide and 1.3 million people around the world has come through the thick walls of Leinster House. It would be naive of me to believe that one protest will be enough to save the world and that is why the protests will continue. The children are doing all they can to make sure that men and women in positions of power, like the committee members, can hear us. We cannot vote but that does not mean that our voices will be silenced. A wave is coming and this is the beginning of a climate action revolution. In time the people in the Gallery, those sitting behind me and I will all be able to vote, and we will be able to rock the system to the core. When we do, politicians will know about it.

**Mr. Cian Parry:** Everyone who has spoken before me has highlighted the harrowing danger our generation faces in the coming decades, as well as the appetite among young people to really change things. The reason Greta Thunberg inspired 15,000 people in Ireland and 1.3 million students globally to strike from school in what was probably the biggest school students’ strike in history was that she did not sugar-coat things. She did not say everything is going to be okay because we are going to sort it out by agreeing to something at this conference or that committee. She said we are doing catastrophic damage to our climate and our ecosystems and we are in big trouble. It is also worth remembering that on the day of the strike, our Taoiseach said he found the school strikers inspiring. The Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment attended the march on the day. However, I think I can say that all of us here were extremely disappointed when the Government hypocritically voted against the Petroleum and Other Minerals Development (Amendment) (Climate Emergency Measures) Bill 2018. If we are to stay below 2°C degrees of warming we need to leave fossil fuels in the ground. I would like those present who voted against that Bill to give us a good explanation of why they did so.

**Chairman:** On behalf of the committee I thank our witnesses for coming before us. Their timing is very important as we sign off on this cross-party report, which I hope and feel will meet their expectations. They want action and that is what we are providing on a cross-party basis, not just for the lifetime of this Government but for future Governments, in order to reach our climate targets. I thank the witnesses for coming before us. They spoke so articulately. One could hear a pin drop in the room. It was the most silent session we have had throughout our seven months of meetings. We look forward to engaging with them in the future. This standing committee will continue and we will hold the Oireachtas and the Government to account on the implementation of these actions. Our witnesses deserve a big round of applause.

*Sitting suspended at 2.44 p.m. and resumed at 3.06 p.m.*

**Chairman:** We will now take some deferred votes in resuming consideration of the recommendations made in chapter 6. They will be taken consequentially. We discussed the questions to be put yesterday. Amendment No. 45 is in the name of Deputy Eamon Ryan and seeks to insert a new recommendation on speed limits. Amendment No. 46 is in the name of Deputy Bríd Smith and seeks to insert a new recommendation on free public transport. Amendment No. 35 is also in the name of Deputy Bríd Smith and seeks to insert a new recommendation on taxing agrifood producers. On the question, “That Recommendation No. 45 stand part of the report”, a division has been challenged and, pursuant to Standing Orders, the division will now be taken by the clerk to the committee. This is from yesterday’s proceedings and is the Green Party amendment No. 45 relating to speed limits.

Question put.

The Committee divided: Tá;, 5; Níl, 12.	
Tá;	Níl;
O’Sullivan, Grace.	Brophy, Colm.
Pringle, Thomas.	Butler, Mary.
Ryan, Eamon.	Chambers, Jack.
Sherlock, Sean.	Corcoran Kennedy, Marcella.
Smith, Bríd.	Daly, Paul.
	Dooley, Timmy.

	Heydon, Martin.
	Lombard, Tim.
	Marshall, Ian.
	Mulherin, Michelle.
	Naughton, Hildegarde.
	Neville, Tom.

Question declared lost.

Staan: Deputies Imelda Munster and Brian Stanley and Senator Máire Devine.

**Chairman:** Amendment No. 46 is in the name of Deputy Bríd Smith and proposes inserting a recommendation on free public transport. On the question, “that the new recommendation be inserted into the report”, a division has been challenged and the division will now be taken.

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** It is that the committee recommends that the Government make a commitment to introduce free public transport as a long-term goal to help reduce CO2 emissions.

Question put.

The Committee divided: Tá;, 8; Níl, 12.	
Tá;	Níl;
Devine, Máire.	Brophy, Colm.
Munster, Imelda.	Butler, Mary.
O’Sullivan, Grace.	Chambers, Jack.
Pringle, Thomas.	Corcoran Kennedy, Marcella.
Ryan, Eamon.	Daly, Paul.
Sherlock, Sean.	Dooley, Timmy.
Smith, Bríd.	Heydon, Martin.
Stanley, Brian.	Lombard, Tim.
	Marshall, Ian.
	Mulherin, Michelle.
	Naughton, Hildegarde.
	Neville, Tom.

Question declared lost.

**Chairman:** We will move to deal with amendment No. 37, in the name of Deputy Bríd Smith, inserting a new recommendation on taxing agrifood producers. The question is that the new recommendation be inserted in the report and on that question, a division has been challenged. The division will now be taken.

**Deputy Brian Stanley:** When we discussed this yesterday there was some suggestion that we would refer this to the standing committee. A number of members seemed to be in favour of that.

**Chairman:** We can always do that.

**Deputy Brian Stanley:** I am saying that by way of being helpful.

**Chairman:** We can do that with anything, Deputy.

**Deputy Brian Stanley:** Very different views were expressed but we also felt that we did not have enough evidence to come down one way or the other on it.

**Chairman:** There were some people who were clearly against this. I did not allow many members to come in because there was a vote in the Seanad and many Senators wanted to contribute on this matter.

**Deputy Brian Stanley:** That is correct.

**Chairman:** I knew they were against it and I held off on the vote here because many Senators had to be in the Seanad. I am conscious that today we want to move on with the report but there were many who were in strong disagreement with this. That is why I deferred it until today. We can discuss anything in respect of the standing committee. Can we proceed with a vote on this?

Question put.

The Committee divided: Tá, 4; Níl, 13.	
Tá;	Níl;
O'Sullivan, Grace.	Brophy, Colm.
Pringle, Thomas.	Butler, Mary.
Ryan, Eamon.	Chambers, Jack.
Smith, Bríd.	Corcoran Kennedy, Marcella.
	Daly, Paul.
	Dooley, Timmy.
	Heydon, Martin.
	Lombard, Tim.
	Marshall, Ian.
	Mulherin, Michelle.
	Naughton, Hildegard.
	Neville, Tom.
	Sherlock, Sean.

Question declared lost.

Staan: Deputies Imelda Munster and Brian Stanley and Senator Máire Devine.

**Chairman:** We now resume on chapter six, which has three recommendations. Recommendations Nos. 1 and 2 have no amendments. Are these agreed? Agreed.

There are a number of amendments proposed for recommendation No. 3. I understand there is a cross-party amendment. Does Deputy Dooley wish to speak to this amendment?

**Deputy Timmy Dooley:** I have had some very considerable concerns here over the last number of days about the introduction of a carbon tax without the appropriate measures put in place to assist those people who would be affected the greatest by any increasing trajectory on carbon pricing. From Fianna Fáil's and my perspective we were deeply concerned there was no clear methodology to ensure the funds that would be raised by any carbon tax would go back into the greening of our economy. To that end, it was also vitally important that people who would be affected by an increase in the costs to their home heating and fuel - those who might be referred to as vulnerable to fuel poverty - were catered for, and that they would not feel any economic impact through the introduction of carbon pricing.

I am pleased enough with a compromise text, which is now being circulated. This ensures and agrees that the proceeds from carbon pricing should be ring-fenced in legislation to ensure that any moneys from a carbon pricing regime would not go into the general Exchequer funding. A fund would be created, the moneys from which would be used to assist people in making the transition away from fossil fuels and towards our objective to have a carbon neutral society. In addition, the implementation of a carbon pricing trajectory should only be implemented when an evidence-based plan is in place to increase supports and incentives for climate action measures, including the protection of those vulnerable to fuel poverty. The wording of the proposed amendment is now in the circulated text. I am prepared to answer any questions on this.

**Senator Máire Devine:** I have a technical question. The Chairman said it was a cross-party amendment. Who is the other party to this?

**Deputy Timmy Dooley:** There is-----

**Chairman:** I will let people contribute. Does Deputy Sherlock want to come in? Does Senator Devine want to ask something else?

**Senator Máire Devine:** I would like to have known. If it has cross-party support, it is the first I have known of it.

**Chairman:** Deputy Sherlock?

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** Have we any more hard copies of the revised text?

**Chairman:** We will get more. There is another copy of it here. It is on the screen also.

**Senator Máire Devine:** It is only on the screen this second. It is not on the piece of paper.

**Chairman:** There was a typo there.

**Deputy Sean Sherlock:** As is the case in these matters, one is trying to arrive at a common position to seek to find some sort of compromise, for which one seeks to find a majority or a consensus. While we are talking technically about amendments that are on the table to be agreed or voted upon, the Labour Party has two very specific amendments Nos. 26 and 27. On the basis of the agreed text that has now come forward - agreed by the Labour Party, Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and the Green Party, we are now happy to withdraw our amendments. We feel that the proposal of the compromise for mechanisms to be put in place to look at how carbon taxes would affect those people in fuel impoverished houses - and that a mechanism is put in place so the most vulnerable people are protected - means we can sign up to this. At this stage, I am quite happy to withdraw amendments No. 26 and 27.

**Chairman:** Okay, those amendments are withdrawn.

**Deputy Martin Heydon:** On the new amendment, there are key points in this that are very important for Fine Gael and we have always talked about giving certainty to individuals and businesses with regard to the element of a trajectory around carbon pricing. I remind people again that carbon pricing increasing over time to 2030 is not a revenue-raising measure. It is designed to change all of our behaviour and how we live. We have plenty of carrot, but some measures need an element of stick also. We hope that this would change how people make decisions, knowing the trajectory is there, and it would give them certainty so they can plan accordingly. This is why we see that as so important. Carbon pricing is only one element of a suite of measures to address those areas.

Another key priority for Fine Gael has been the area of consultation. It is important for us to have key engagement across all sectors including: town hall meetings, Tidy Towns groups, local branch and county executives of farming organisations and environmental organisations. We want as much consultation and engagement as possible in a short, sharp period in order that we get buy-in on how any increased revenue is best used in order to have the impact we want. It is also important to us that the ring-fencing element makes sure that this funding is all for climate action measures.

When we started out on this journey last July, we were acutely aware that 21 politicians from different backgrounds across a variety of views were very unlikely to agree on everything but I believe there is an acceptance among a lot of us - although I will just speak on behalf of my own colleagues - that without a shadow of a doubt this is the issue of our generation. A solution to this issue will take a lot more than the electoral cycle of four to five years. In that regard, consensus is very important to us. This is why we are willing to agree to this. We are not happy about every little thing, as nobody will be. There are elements of certain things one would like a little more of but the art of compromise is absolutely key in politics. For an issue of this importance, the consequences of which go far beyond the electoral cycle and beyond the next general election and others, it is very important to have that general consensus as far as possible across the political divide. This is why we agree to this amendment here.

**Deputy Eamon Ryan:** I agree with the two previous speakers. It is very important and significant and it is a good day for Irish climate policy when there is clear agreement, but I acknowledge that among certain parties there are different views, which is perfectly valid. Among a number of parties, however, there is agreement that we will accept the advice of the Climate Change Advisory Council to raise the carbon price to €80 per tonne, at least, by 2030.

There is real importance in the clear commitment that we are ring-fencing any such revenue.

We still have to decide whether it is for hypothecation or whether it is a dividend that is returned to the citizens. There is real advantage in that latter option in regard to protecting those on lower incomes in particular. It has real advantages in that if people are saving energy, they are getting more net cash gain from it. If there are proposals on how hypothecation would work better, that is what we need to work out in the next few months in a plan, and we should be open to different options. If someone else comes up with a brilliant version of what we could do with the money, that should not be ruled out. This is significant in that it is cast-iron. If this consensus makes its way into the decision not just of this Government but probably of a future Government, although it depends who gets elected, that is a significant gain for environmental policy. The revenue is not a tax to raise money. It is a tax to give a signal and to help the climate action we need to take.

Third, with regard to the new amendments, tying this to an evidence-based plan makes ra-

tional and obvious sense. We have to prepare that plan under law. The European governance package that was agreed sets out that we have to have a national energy and climate action plan by the end of the year. That will be a plan that has to direct what we are going to do over the next ten years to 2030, so of course we have to do this. The work of this committee from now until the end of the year is to assist the Government in the development of that plan and to open up that process as the EU governance system encourages. What we have done in this committee is probably one of the exemplar models within the EU, if one talks to European Commission officials about how parliaments should engage in that process. We have started well by having a Citizens' Assembly, by going into committee in public session and by going into our own private sessions, so that is a good process. Those three gains are very good and significant.

The one risk I fear is that this is such a politically contentious issue. It is the issue the media will talk about above anything else. They will never talk about governance, climate systems or retrofitting, which is not that sexy, or about changing land use or peatlands restoration, which is where we could make the big carbon savings but which are hard to get on the six o'clock news. We do not need carbon tax to become a political football, bouncing around for the next ten years and certainly not for the next six months. We all know there is a risk in the next six months as we go into a potentially tough budget and I do not want carbon tax to be in the middle of that. We have a chance here to give certainty, and to get it out from the political game and into policy would help. It is not the key measure. It will do 10% to 15% of what we need to do but given we have a 70% gap, 10% is significant.

I have one further amendment to put. The second page of the draft recommendations as presented states:

In view of the above:

That the Minister for Finance should set out a carbon price trajectory that rises to €80 per tonne by 2030...

My amendment proposes the wording: "That the Minister for Finance should set out a compromise price trajectory that, starting in 2020, rises to €80 per tonne by 2030". I believe there is agreement on this, although those who do not agree with a carbon tax do not agree with it starting in any year. However, among those of us who have been arguing in favour of this, my understanding throughout our negotiations and deliberations is that there has been common agreement that this is something that will start this year. Having heard the call from the students, some of whom are still in the Visitors Gallery, I believe we should act now. We should start this year and not wait 12 years. If we do not start next year, we all know that, in politics, the year after that is not going to be any easier. In fact, this is probably the moment in time more than any other moment because of those climate strikes putting pressure on us to get this over the line. I put forward that amendment to make sure we are clear that this would start in 2020. Other than that, our party backs the proposal.

**Deputy Brian Stanley:** I am a bit disappointed. For the past eight months the committee has operated in a collaborative way and, overnight, how the committee operates has changed in that we are suddenly told a substantial cross-party amendment has been submitted and this is the first sight we have of it. That flies in the face of how things have worked to date. As the Vice Chairman of the committee, I want to express my disappointment with that.

The amendment in front of us is obviously to give some cover to Fianna Fáil in regard to what is happening here. We have set out our case in this regard. There is now a proposal for another amendment to an amendment. Sinn Féin has an amendment that we want to put here

today, if these amendments are going to be allowed to go before the committee. I propose that these amendments be allowed.

This decision to increase is going ahead. We want to change how things are done and we want to change the volume of carbon emissions being pumped into the atmosphere. We have heard the evidence over the past eight months and, before that, the evidence was heard by the committee of the previous Dáil, which dealt with legislation. Sinn Féin sought stronger legislation that had binding sectoral targets, although, unfortunately, we did not achieve that. The fact is that what we are doing here today is giving the green light to further increase carbon tax after the increase a few years ago. In effect, with VAT and everything else on top, what we are talking about is €2.50 on a bale of briquettes and in the region of €12 on a bag of fuel.

We want to move away from fossil fuels and we have spoken at length about this. There is a lot of good stuff in the report, which we have backed. There are nine chapters in the report and we made proposals that fed into that in a constructive and collaborative way, and there is much in it to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and to act in a more sustainable way-----

**Chairman:** Has the Deputy an amendment that he wants the committee to consider?

**Deputy Brian Stanley:** I will come to it. The Chairman might allow me to speak. The previous speakers got a fair shot. We have just been handed this amendment and we are entitled to respond.

**Chairman:** Absolutely.

**Deputy Brian Stanley:** Most people in the country at this point do not have the means to deal with this. There is also the issue of the Border. If carbon taxes are being increased on one side of the Border and not increased on the other side, that needs to be considered. It was said this revenue will be ring-fenced. I listened carefully to the Minister, Deputy Donohoe, about the sugar tax and whether it could be ring-fenced and used for health purposes. Those who took the time to listen to him will have heard the answer clearly, although perhaps a member of the Government party will want to challenge that. The fact is that, as we sit here to discuss this, the poorest of households are not insulated and do not have the means to retrofit. We have a weak public transport system, particularly beyond the M50. Businesses are struggling day to day with higher costs upon costs, including rates and energy costs. I remind the committee that energy costs have risen by an average of 24% in the past few years and over 10% since last August, which needs to be considered. The people who are renting over 300,000 homes in the State are in the most poorly insulated houses with the most inefficient and expensive means of heating. What happens to those people? Where is the protection for them in the report? We propose amending chapter 6, page 43, to delete all references to carbon taxes in the document and to recommend no increases to carbon tax.

**Senator Máire Devine:** We have worked collaboratively and it has been a great experience. At the beginning of the meeting, however, when I entered the room, I learned that Fine Gael, Fianna Fáil, the Labour Party and the Green Party have connived because it is not a cross-party amendment but rather one created by those four parties in an attempt to alienate the Sinn Féin members and perhaps one or two other members. I am comfortable with alienation and I do not mind it because it just goes over my head. I am not comfortable, however, with the alienation of the people we represent, whom we have widely consulted, or that we were not consulted in respect of this amendment. We are present to ensure social justice. One cannot say that we as a party are not doing our environmental patriotic duty or that we are somehow against the green-

ing of our economy, nation and all our lives.

I second Deputy Stanley's amendment. Carbon pricing or carbon tax - whatever name one wants to use - is not progressive; it is regressive, and it hurts the people we most need to protect and the people who will protect our country and planet, but we are punishing and blaming them and making them feel guilty. The Government needs to take that on board. It is disappointing and socially unjustifiable to introduce a carbon tax, which is why I am passionate about the matter. I thank the committee for including us in the collaborative, cross-party discussions. I am very upset.

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** I have listened to the discussion on the matter again and I reiterate that it is similar to Henry Ford saying the customer can have a car in any colour he or she wants as long as it is black. No matter how one rephrases or restructures the mechanism in the document, it will still say ordinary people will be subject to an increase in carbon tax and that their personal and individual behaviour will be addressed by taxing it, but that the Government refuses to consider the behaviour or recklessness of agribusiness and the fossil fuel industry. I presume that many members read the reports in the newspapers in respect of two matters, the first of which was the IEA telling us that global emissions hit record levels in the second half of last year, rising by 1.7%. As was strikingly outlined to us by the young people, we need to take leaps, not baby steps, yet all we are doing by increasing carbon tax for ordinary people is a baby step, not a leap.

The other report in the paper is probably even more interesting in respect of my argument. Several leading Irish companies have been named and shamed for not reporting their greenhouse gas emissions to CDP, a not-for-profit organisation which measures companies' impact on the environment. It highlighted prominent names, including Paddy Power Betfair, Ryanair, Permanent TSB, Total Produce and Applegreen, for not responding to its mission survey. We are concerned about the individual behaviour of people who are rightly identified in some of the paragraphs as suffering from fuel poverty, although one does not need to qualify for fuel allowance to suffer from fuel poverty, as we have argued time and again. We want to conduct surveys and national reports on the subject, which is correct, but we do not want to deal with the glaringly obvious issue, namely, that industry and agribusiness, on a large scale, have more to answer for than the individual behaviour of my constituents or the Chairperson's constituents, yet they are all we seem to have in our sights.

I was gobsmacked that after the committee had heard all its evidence, a report was dropped in to it to justify carbon tax. I strongly disagree with the report, however, and, as I noted earlier, it was drafted and assembled by economists - not by environmentalists or scientists - to justify wrongly why carbon tax works, even though evidence exists to counter that claim. There have been many global and international reports which show that carbon tax does not reduce emissions by more than 1% or 2%. Carbon tax fails in the reduction of emissions and the reduction it yields is limited compared with the reduction there would be from the other measures we recommend. Members have stated it is not a revenue-raising measure but then they discuss how we can spend it. If it is about changing behaviour, why are we not examining changing the behaviour of those who commit the worst mortal sins in respect of emissions internationally? We will not deal with that because it is too controversial. It would be a leap rather than a step but it is a political leap that members of the committee seem unwilling to take.

I request an adjournment to allow us to read the report. I want to take it seriously but it has just landed in front of me. I have not had time to scrutinise it and would like an adjournment to consider it. I would also like to draw the committee's attention to a measure in the penultimate

paragraph, namely, that the Government should conduct a fuel poverty survey of all cohorts and should show the short, medium and long-term impact of carbon tax on fuel poverty and the options to increase the tax. I tabled a comprehensive amendment that was removed from the body of the text and inserted into the section relating to carbon tax. It puts me, as an opponent of carbon tax on ordinary people, into the position of voting against the entire amendment, including my amendment, which is grossly unfair. That amendment on fuel poverty, which I introduced to the committee, should stand alone, it should be decoupled from carbon tax, and we should be allowed to vote on it separately. I will certainly not be compromised nor be put in the position of voting against my own amendment after weeks of debate.

**Deputy Imelda Munster:** The amendment would require the Government to increase supports and incentives, but I wonder whether 24 hours had passed since its proposers said they could not contemplate introducing an increase to carbon tax until after these measures are put in place. They seem to be satisfied with inserting an amendment that calls on the Government at some future date to increase supports and incentives for climate action measures. It is utterly contradictory within a 24-hour period, given that the Government has had ample opportunity to propose help or provide alternatives. It is crystal clear that people want to reduce emissions and it is our job to make it feasible for them to do so, but to drive that behavioural change we must provide alternatives. The Government has not done that to date and there is no indication that it will. If we are serious about the issue, we will have to invest in retrofitting homes, providing fuel alternatives, and improving and providing a sustainable public transport network throughout the State, but in every such aspect the Government has failed dismally. I do not know how Fianna Fáil believes the matter will provide it cover, or perhaps the Government has indicated when it will provide the investment and retrofitting of houses. Let us take, for example, a family which lives in rural Ireland and has a poorly insulated house. One person must drive an old car to work each day and bring the children to and from school. Is it seriously being suggested that increasing carbon tax by a factor of four will assist that family? I would have thought we would be progressive enough to insist the Government act in advance of any additional charges.

**Deputy Timmy Dooley:** Will the Deputy take an interjection?

**Deputy Imelda Munster:** How would a fourfold increase in carbon tax help that family insulate its home or make it more heat efficient? The Government has not proposed helping that family in any way, shape or form and Deputy Dooley's party members should know that they are having the wool pulled over their eyes day in, day out.

**Deputy Timmy Dooley:** I can help the Deputy if she wants.

**Deputy Imelda Munster:** There is no evidence that carbon tax works or that it is effective in any meaningful way. Taxing people is the typical go-to response, rather than bringing in measures that would be meaningful, sincere and long-lasting.

**Deputy Timmy Dooley:** Donald Trump does not believe there is a climate change issue.

**Deputy Imelda Munster:** This is bad policy, it is lazy and it is a knee-jerk reaction.

**Chairman:** In case there is any misunderstanding of the fourfold increase, the proposal is to bring it to €80 by 2030, and not 2020. There is a perception and a narrative that a fourfold increase to €80 is to happen by 2020. That is not the case. The advice of the Climate Change Advisory Council was that it be set at €80 by 2030 but some people are confused.

**Deputy Imelda Munster:** It is not set in stone - it could be 2021.

**Deputy Timmy Dooley:** If we take a break, Deputy Munster might read the text in question, which sets out a carbon price trajectory that rises to €80 per tonne by 2030. It states that it should only be implemented when an evidence-based plan is in place to increase supports and incentives for climate action measures, including the protection of those vulnerable to fuel poverty. The Deputy talked about the necessity for evidence but it is catered for in that section. Given the trajectory between now and 2030, it would be 63 cent on a bag of coal, 13 cent on a bale of briquettes and 1.5 cent on a litre of diesel. Those of us who drive petrol or diesel cars will have noticed the fluctuation in the fuel price over the past number of months. It has gone from a low in the past six months of €1.05 or €1.06 per litre to approximately €1.40 at the moment.

We can all find ways to be against the issues at the heart of this or we can try to reach a consensus on putting in place an appropriate response to a crisis which young people begged us to address by taking leaps. Some people are suggesting we should leap to solve the problem by putting it on somebody else's shoulders. Large emitters of carbon and greenhouse gases will suffer most under this kind of progressive approach to pricing carbon. The big business against which Deputy Bríd Smith rails, which also happen to be significant employers in the agrifood sector, will have to pay more as a result of this. They will have to pay more in the cost of their inputs, which will assist them in transitioning from being heavy polluters of the atmosphere with carbon. The knock-on effect will be to ensure that there is a move away from the harmful products of Exxon Mobil and the other exploration companies, which the Deputy rightly identified as problematic. By changing behaviour, it will achieve what she wants, which is to put these companies out of business.

**Deputy Sean Sherlock:** The wording is clear that the Government should, prior to the introduction of any increase in carbon taxation, examine the impacts on low-income families and, on the basis of these findings, introduce specific policy measures to assist those who may not be in a position to immediately transition from fossil fuels, including the potential use of social protection mechanisms such as tax credits and welfare payments. Carbon tax is in existence and yields approximately €400 million but that €400 million goes to the Exchequer. This committee is seeking to ring-fence moneys collected from the tax so that retrofitting can be done and we can transition from carbon to meet our targets.

If we agree to this amendment the Government would conduct a review, to be completed by June 2019, of what may be the most appropriate measure and what is the nature and extent of fuel poverty across all cohorts. We are building into the amendment a set of measures that seeks to protect the most vulnerable but ensures that we do not move until the review has been done. June 2019 may be too short a timeframe and it may need to be pushed out to July. It is important that we study what is in the amendment first, before we draw any conclusions.

**Chairman:** I note the Deputy's suggestion for July as the date for a review to be completed.

**Senator Tim Lombard:** I support this motion as it is a balanced proposal and it will bring a lot of clarity to the issue we have discussed over the past few months. Many people came before us but when the Climate Change Action Advisory Council came before us and Professor Fitzgerald made his professional evidence known, we saw where we needed to go as regards carbon tax. The council's advice was clear that the carbon tax needed to go to €80 per tonne by 2030, meaning that over the next 11 years, we will raise carbon tax by €20 per tonne to €80. We sat here listened to the professional advice that was given, we questioned it and we took it on board. Very few of us could say the advice was not professional and we received no other advice to suggest it was not appropriate. There is no point in us sitting here-----

**Senator Máire Devine:** It may have been professional, scientific advice but it did not take this situation into account.

**Senator Tim Lombard:** I did not interrupt the Senator.

**Chairman:** If Senator Devine wants to speak, she should indicate and I will let her in. I ask her not to interrupt. We have conducted ourselves very well so far and I do not want this to unravel on a small piece of our very important work.

**Senator Tim Lombard:** This is an important issue and is an important step for us and our society. We listened to our young people and heard what they wanted. Now we are trying to move forward. Nobody wants to put taxes on people but this is about trying to get modal change and to bring about a change in society so that society is better for all. It is important to bring people with us and it is not about attacking the agricultural community or co-ops because we think they can pay for it. This is an important measure that we support. It is not that we want to be championing a tax, but we think it will be best for Irish society and for our environment, based on the evidence the committee has heard in the past eight months. The Climate Change Advisory Council, which has been very critical of Government policy in the past, presented the committee with evidence which we must take on board. We must do the correct thing for people and for society and not just play to our electorate.

**Chairman:** Deputy Smith raised the issue of decoupling the issue of fuel poverty. While she is making her contribution, perhaps we could assist her in some shape or form.

I note that Deputy Sherlock is offering.

**Deputy Sean Sherlock:** I would like to be helpful to Deputy Smith. How will the Chairman proceed technically with that amendment?

**Chairman:** We could work that out. Perhaps we could make an additional new recommendation. I am in the hands of members on this.

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** I would to respond to Deputy Dooley's comment that the ultimate aim of our report is to impact on the industries that are responsible for the most emissions. He articulated an interesting thesis that sounds plausible. It would be great if companies such as Glanbia, the Goodman companies and Exxon Mobile and all of the global corporations would have to pay more towards carbon emissions, which would be ring-fenced to help poor people change their behaviour. It is a great thesis, but there is no empirical evidence for it anywhere in the world. My problem is that the committee allowed an ESRI-Climate Action report on why carbon tax must be increased to €80 a tonne - it is quoted in the amendment - to be dropped into the middle of the proceedings and did not allow time for counter evidence. There is no evidence to back up Deputy Dooley's claim that this tax would be passed on to the global emissions of the dirtiest industries in the world. This tax will be passed on to ordinary people, end of story. That is why I say that one can have any colour car one wants as long as it is black.

I want my motion decoupled. I will go back to the original text that I proposed in paragraph 4 in the original chapter on financing climate change.

The Committee recommends that the Government conduct a review to be completed by June 2019 into the most appropriate measure of, extent and nature of fuel poverty across all cohorts and to include in this review the short, medium and long-term impact of increasing the carbon tax.

I do not believe this amendment goes anywhere near it. It is a play on words. Hats off to Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael; they are brilliant with words. I hope I learn that skills some day to throw words back at them.

**Deputy Timmy Dooley:** The Smith does not need any help.

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** It is stated in the yellow paragraph towards the end:

The Minister for Finance should set out a carbon price trajectory that rises to €80 per tonne per year and this should only be implemented when an evidence-based plan is in place to increase supports.

It refers to this happening when the plan is in place, not when the increased supports and incentives are in place. That is very smart, but I do not swallow it. I hope that nobody in the Gallery or among the public swallows it either. It is the one measure that the committee will be renowned for. The message is we should not think of touching the global corporations or about free public transport; one would be nuts to think about it; we should not think of increasing the amount we spend on public transport; we should not go near agri-business or Larry Goodman or Glanbia, but we should go after every man, woman and child in the country and put more tax on them. That is what Deputy Dooley is doing.

**Chairman:** The final speaker who has indicated is Deputy Munster. I ask her to be brief. We will adjourn if we need to for ten minutes to try to come to-----

**Deputy Imelda Munster:** I will comment on what Deputy Dooley said about the evidence-based plan. There is nothing concrete in it and he should know better than to rely on the Government when the Government has not done anything so far. The Government has had ample time since the committee was set up to propose alternative ways of assisting people to drive that behavioural change. Deputy Dooley's amendment is that when an evidence-based plan is in place, supports and incentives should be increased. It is a little cosy amendment that is well worded in the sense that it says everything and nothing, but at the same time all it does is endorse the carbon tax for all the reasons that Fianna Fáil opposed it 24 hours ago.

Overall this report is very good and we are supportive of the majority of the recommendations. One has to provide alternatives to drive behavioural changes. We could not support the proposals on carbon tax in chapter 6, but we fully support the majority of the chapters. Yesterday, the Fianna Fáil members made the same case as we in Sinn Féin did, so perhaps they would like to support our amendment, which deletes chapter 6 and any references to carbon tax in the report. We would have a fine report, which incorporates all of the other recommendations that the majority support. We should omit the carbon tax proposals until such time as we get a solid commitment to a plan, timeframe, scale and date from the Government as to when it will offer alternatives to drive that behavioural change.

**Chairman:** I will call Deputy Stanley and then Senator Devine.

**Deputy Brian Stanley:** It is very clear from the final line in the amendment that the decision on how to allocate revenue up to 2030 would be taken prior to the Budget Statement 2020.

I am interested in the figures that have been included here. The figures published by the Department of Finance on 19 December 2018, which were reported by the national broadcaster that day, stated that there would be a €10.50 carbon tax increase on a bag of fuel and an increase of €2.25 on a bail of briquettes. We tabled a parliamentary question about those carbon tax figures earlier this week and the reply stated that the figures do not include VAT. One is, therefore,

talking about an increase in the region of €12 on a bag of fuel and €2.60 on a bail of briquettes.

**Deputy Timmy Dooley:** For clarity, that is based on a carbon tax of €100 a tonne. Deputy Stanley's figures do not take into account the carbon tax of €20 a tonne that is in place.

**Chairman:** I do not mind an interjection if it is a factual check, as long as it is brief and not disruptive.

**Deputy Brian Stanley:** These increases are substantial, on top of the high cost of fuel and energy. This decision has been taken without looking at all the international evidence or even a cross section of it. It was based on selective information. We have examined what has happened in other countries which have a carbon tax and some that do not. We have had a carbon tax since 2010, and apart from the recession between 2010 and 2015 when the country almost closed down and there was a slight reduction in emissions, there has been no decrease in emissions. We brought forward a document last year, Powering Ireland 2030, which was based on a year's research carried out by people working for us, talking to experts and anybody to whom we could talk in the industry. It set out a way of powering the 32 counties of Ireland by 2030. It would have meant an 80% switch to renewable energy sources. Members will note that in the report - we have fought hard to get it in - there would be a 70% switch to renewable energy sources by 2030. It is good that it is included. We obviously argued for a figure of 80%. There is a lot of good stuff in the report which contains nine chapters. We are very happy with the measures across them, but we must change the way we generate power because, more and more, heating systems will be electrified. Therefore, we will need more electricity. More and more transport services will be electrified also, but we cannot simply think we can drive around in what look like nice eco-friendly electric vehicles powered by electricity supplied from fossil fuel or nuclear power plants in England via a cable across the Irish Sea. We are in favour of the interconnector, but we need to generate power on this island from clean sources of energy. Many expert groups have set out a vision for how this can be done. We have tapped into it and believe the committee's document would go some way towards doing so, which is welcome, but we cannot simply put a carbon tax on people without a shift in the way of how we generate power, heat our homes and move about and without making it easier to cycle and use public transport and having a good network of charging points, including in rural Ireland, to enable people to use electric vehicles. If the Government simply levies this tax, all that it will do is crucify middle and low income households and particularly small businesses.

**Senator Máire Devine:** As the seconder of Deputy Stanley's amendment, I endorse it, but I also want to respond to Senator Lombard in the correct manner. We had before us professionals to whom we all listened and some of them told us that a carbon tax might prove useful. We also carried out our own research and the jury is still out on the issue which we have spent eight or nine months discussing. Regardless, the professionals gave us their scientific opinion in their areas of expertise, but what was not taken into account was the impact on ordinary families and individuals, on whom such a tax would place the heaviest burden. Senator Lombard accused me of playing to the electorate. I am not; I am representing it. That is what I am doing. I do not play to the electorate; rather, I represent the people who are terrified about from where the next washing machine will come because they do not have the cash to buy it.

*(Interruptions).*

**Chairman:** Let the Senator continue her contribution.

**Senator Máire Devine:** I missed that interruption. I was probably better off missing it.

**Deputy Timmy Dooley:** They cannot find Sinn Féin councillors. Surely to God, they are not-----

**Chairman:** Please let the Senator finish.

**Senator Máire Devine:** Will Deputy Dooley, please, do it in the appropriate manner? I appeal to the young people we have had here on several occasions who have been triumphant in getting across the message of how much on the edge we might be on our planet in the context of climate change. I know they understand social justice and the demand for same because they have led in changing the country. They will understand the fuel poverty that is facing a lot of families about whom they talked when they made their presentation in the audiovisual room on 6 March.

**Deputy Timmy Dooley:** I will try to bring this discussion to a conclusion because there still seems to be some confusion about the intention of the amendments we have brought forward. They are about accepting the necessity for a price trajectory in carbon pricing, from €20 per tonne to €80 per tonne by 2030. That is where we need clarity. The amendment reads: “And this should only be implemented when an evidenced-based plan is in place”. To me, the words “in place” mean that it is available. The amendment goes on to state: “To increase supports and incentives for climate action measures, including the protection of those vulnerable to fuel poverty”. If there is any doubt about the meaning of the term “in place” or further qualification is needed, it is in the second paragraph which reads: “The Government should, prior to the introduction of any increase in carbon taxation, examine the impacts [etc.]... introduce specific policy measures to assist those who may not be in a position to immediately transition from fossil fuels, including the potential use of social protection mechanisms, such as tax credits and welfare payments”.

It is worth remembering that this is a committee of the Houses. It is not the Cabinet room. Having heard the evidence, we are collectively making suggestions and recommendations etc. to this and future Governments. It is not for us to take a decision and set the budget which we are not deciding today. We are not deciding specific policies. We will have other opportunities to do so as we have all been fortunate to be elected as Members of the Houses. This is an effort, on a cross-party basis, to make recommendations to the Government. We were very strongly of the view that our suggestions needed to be in sequence. The strong recommendation from the party I represent is adamant that we not progress with an increase in carbon charges until such time as recommendations had been made and a plan and incentives had been put in place. That is very clear in the language used. I do not know how we could be more helpful because I accept that Deputies Stanley and Munster and Senator Devine have engaged fully and proactively in the campaign. We largely agree on all aspects of it, but I am not surprised that they have an issue because they have flagged it on a few occasions with the idea of increases in carbon pricing. That is a fact and there is no issue for me.

Let us not try to indicate that any of us has greater care than others for those on lower incomes. We are all mindful of them and trying to ensure that, as we transition from fossil fuels, we will protect the people who are most vulnerable to fuel poverty. That is inherent in the recommendation. Can we direct the Government to do it from here? No, we cannot because we are not sitting at the Cabinet table, but, as a collective, we have an opportunity to put it forward. I am clear that if the Government was to follow the advice of the committee and its expressed opinion and if it was true to the report, it would have to put appropriate measures in place to protect those who, as Senator Devine rightly identified, are not in a position to change a car that is ten years old or older, to undertake a deep retrofit of their home or to pay the additional €0.63

on a bag of coal that would have an impact on them on a yearly basis. It is hardwired in the report that the moneys that would be collected would be ring-fenced by a legislative provision in order that they could be used to assist people in making the behavioural change required. The wording is very clear.

We are all concerned that this or a future Government might seek to cherry-pick elements of the report and state, for example, that as it recommended an increase in tax, we should grab it, include it in the bottom line and use it to fill a hole in the Exchequer figure. The report states the Government should not do that. It states it has to identify the appropriate supports and mechanisms to assist those who will be impacted on negatively by an increase in carbon taxes, that plans and schemes need to be put in place and available before charging starts or there are increases in the charges already made. That is why the party I represent, Fianna Fáil, is happy to proceed with it. We did not have a change of heart. We were always very clear, both within these walls and publicly, that we supported carbon pricing as part of the climate change agenda. It was not the be-all and end-all but a component in shifting behaviour. The carbon pricing set out would not be limited to individuals. It would impact on businesses also. I have to reiterate the point to my good friend Deputy Bríd Smith that it is about assisting and encouraging bigger companies, in particular, because they are the ones that use the largest amounts of fossil fuels and contribute most to greenhouse gas emissions. It is in their financial interests to migrate from fossil fuels to cleaner energy sources. This would be a progressive way of assisting them in doing so.

There is a wider debate, in which the Deputy and I differ significantly, about the role of big business in an economy, etc. but the ideological debates are for elsewhere. This is about responding to the chaos and crisis we face in addressing climate change within the next 12 to 13 years. This would be a contribution. We must be careful and mindful in introducing measures that we do not leave people behind or make their lives even more difficult and intolerable.

I want to return to the numbers which were raised earlier. Based on my calculations, a bag of coal which in today's money costs €17 would see an increase of 63 cent year on year. VAT, if added, would another 7 cent, giving a total increase of 70 cent a year. The current price of a bale of briquettes is €4.50, to which 13 cent would be added. VAT would add about another 1 cent. Diesel was the source of Deputy Munster's greatest concern. Coming from a rural constituency and representing people in rural Ireland, both in the agriculture sector and those who have to commute on a daily basis, I share that concern. As I have rightly identified, the fluctuation in the price of diesel has been in the region of 30 to 35 cent in the past six months. The increase in carbon pricing, year on year, would be about 1.5 cent. That is what would be washed into it, so to speak.

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** I rest my case.

**Deputy Timmy Dooley:** That is the reality. I like the idea of there being a trajectory because it would provide certainty. It would tell people who were planning for the future and in the automotive industry that diesel and petrol would become more expensive such that I hope they would take action to meet the demands of society. However, there would be a requirement for the State to provide additional revenue from Exchequer resources to assist in the massive effort that has to be made to undertake a deep retrofit of homes. Resources will have to be provided from the broader Exchequer, not just those raised from the carbon tax.

**Chairman:** Are members agreeable to a suspension of the sitting for 15 minutes?

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** Yes, please.

*Sitting suspended at 4.25 p.m. and resumed at 4.40 p.m.*

**Chairman:** We will have three votes straight away. Rather than waiting for the bells every time, we might just ring the bells first. The first amendment is on the Sinn Féin amendment to delete the amendment. It proposes that all references to carbon tax increase be deleted from the document and that a single recommendation be made in chapter 6 that no increase in carbon tax be made.

After that, we will go to the Green Party amendment.

**Deputy Eamon Ryan:** I will withdraw it. There is clear agreement at the end of the document reflecting on it. All of this work will be concluded prior to budget 2020, and there is common agreement on that timeline except from those who disagree fundamentally with the approach. While we are not the Cabinet, we have built a certain consensus among those parties which agree which will help to make this not be the burning divisive issue. On reflection and listening to the arguments on the wording at the end of that line, and for the sake of time, I am happy to withdraw my amendment.

**Chairman:** There is the Sinn Féin amendment to delete all references to carbon tax. The next amendment is from Deputy Bríd Smith. Did she want to decouple this?

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** Yes.

**Chairman:** I understand that she refers to the cross-party amendment:

The Government should, prior to the introduction of any increase in carbon taxation, examine the impacts on low-income families and on the basis of these findings, introduce specific policy measures to assist those who may not be in a position to immediately transition from fossil fuels, including the potential use of social protection mechanisms, such as tax credits and welfare payments.

The Deputy wants to take that out and to have a separate recommendation. Am I correct?

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** I want the committee to reinsert my amendment which was removed from the original text.

**Chairman:** Does the Deputy want to reinsert it into the report separately?

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** Into the report separately.

**Chairman:** The Deputy does not want it in this cross-party amendment.

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** I do not. I think it is unfair to me and that it should be a separate amendment that ends with “prior to any decision being taken to increase carbon tax”.

**Chairman:** It is No. 28 on this document. The Deputy wants this as a stand-alone recommendation. Is that correct?

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** Can I see the document the Chairman is talking about?

**Chairman:** Yes. After that, we will go to the cross-party amendment. We will have to see how the votes go.

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** I need to qualify this. I am looking at my original request which was taken out by the advisers, not by a vote of this committee. The sentence did not finish with “to include in this review the short, medium and long-term impact of increasing the carbon tax.” It read: “that would be taken into consideration for all cohorts prior to any decision being taken to increase carbon tax.” Those last words are important.

**Senator Ian Marshall:** Where would the Deputy insert that?

**Deputy Sean Sherlock:** On a technical point, if Deputy Smith’s amendment is as she put to the committee, is she now amending her own amendment that she has tabled?

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** I did not amend it. Someone else amended it. My original amendment was that it be done prior to any decision being taken to increase carbon tax.

**Deputy Timmy Dooley:** That text is already there. It reads:

The Government should, prior to the introduction of any increase in carbon taxation, examine the impacts on low-income families and on the basis of these findings, introduce specific policy measures to assist those who may not be in a position to immediately transition from fossil fuels, including the potential use of social protection mechanisms, such as tax credits and welfare payments.

**Chairman:** Deputy Bríd Smith wants that to be a stand-alone recommendation. I do not want to speak for the Deputy, but I believe that is what she wants.

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** The Chair is correct.

**Chairman:** That is the nuance involved here. It would require another vote.

**Deputy Timmy Dooley:** This is all part of a recommendation. It is a qualification within a recommendation. If the Government goes down the carbon tax route, we suggest that should be done in a certain way. I do not profess to be a scholar of English, but it makes absolute sense to me that it remains as it is. We are only talking about the positioning of the text here. The spirit is there, and I suggest we leave it as it is.

**Deputy Sean Sherlock:** My understanding from Deputy Bríd Smith’s earlier intervention was that she wants this to be a stand-alone recommendation, and it will presumably be pressed as such. The issue now before us is that the text of the stand-alone amendment that Deputy Bríd Smith has put forward seems to have changed, and subsequently additional wording must be brought forward to reflect the amendment she seeks to have as a Standing Order.

**Chairman:** If the members agree that can be done.

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** To reiterate my point-----

**Chairman:** The Deputy has made her point clearly. This is a procedural issue.

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** It is hugely-----

**Chairman:** We are changing the wording of the Deputy’s amendment. Normally we cannot do that, but if the members agree we can do that, allowing the Deputy’s recommendation to stand alone. That will be put to a vote. I am clear about what Deputy Bríd Smith wants to do.

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** I thank the Chair.

**Chairman:** She wants to change the wording in recommendation No. 28. Instead of “Prior to taking a decision on carbon tax”, as the Deputy wants, we have to amend the wording so that the members know what they are voting on. Rather than having it as part of the cross-party recommendation the Deputy is concerned that it appears alongside a recommendation that there be a carbon tax.

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** The Chair is correct.

**Chairman:** The amendment is now on the screen; the changes have been made.

**Deputy Sean Sherlock:** I do not want to say anything in the absence of the proposer of the amendment except that I have no problem with her putting forward her amendment because she is amending it herself.

**Chairman:** We are working on the re-wording of Deputy Bríd Smith’s amendment. She has left the room to get a new wording for her own amendment. We have put it on the screen. Is Deputy Bríd Smith happy with what has been put on screen? It concerns “The immediate and long-term impact of increasing the carbon tax”. Does the Deputy see the change on screen? It continues: “Prior to taking a decision on carbon tax.”

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** I am looking at a document that has been altered many times.

**Chairman:** We are trying to rectify that. Can the Deputy help us?

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** Yes, that is fine.

**Chairman:** We will now deal with the Sinn Féin amendment.

Question put.

The Committee divided: Tá; 5; Níl, 15.	
Tá;	Níl;
Devine, Máire.	Brophy, Colm.
Munster, Imelda.	Butler, Mary.
Pringle, Thomas.	Chambers, Jack.
Smith, Bríd.	Corcoran Kennedy, Marcella.
Stanley, Brian.	Daly, Paul.
	Dooley, Timmy.
	Heydon, Martin.
	Lombard, Tim.
	Marshall, Ian.
	Mulherin, Michelle.
	Naughton, Hildegarde.
	Neville, Tom.
	O’Sullivan, Grace.
	Ryan, Eamon.
	Sherlock, Sean.

Question declared lost.

**Chairman:** We will now deal with Deputy Bríd Smith’s amendment, seeking to amend the amendment by deleting the paragraph on fuel poverty.

Question put.

The Committee divided: Tá;, 5; Níl, 15.	
Tá;	Níl;
Devine, Máire.	Brophy, Colm.
Munster, Imelda.	Butler, Mary.
Pringle, Thomas.	Chambers, Jack.
Smith, Bríd.	Corcoran Kennedy, Marcella.
Stanley, Brian.	Daly, Paul.
	Dooley, Timmy.
	Heydon, Martin.
	Lombard, Tim.
	Marshall, Ian.
	Mulherin, Michelle.
	Naughton, Hildegarde.
	Neville, Tom.
	O’Sullivan, Grace.
	Ryan, Eamon.
	Sherlock, Sean.

Question declared lost.

**Chairman:** We will now move to the cross-party amendment. The question is that the cross-party amendment be made. The division has been challenged, so pursuant to Standing Orders the division will now be taken by the clerk to the committee.

Question put.

The Committee divided: Tá;, 15; Níl, 5.	
Tá;	Níl;
Brophy, Colm.	Devine, Máire.
Butler, Mary.	Munster, Imelda.
Chambers, Jack.	Pringle, Thomas.
Corcoran Kennedy, Marcella.	Smith, Bríd.
Daly, Paul.	Stanley, Brian.
Dooley, Timmy.	
Heydon, Martin.	
Lombard, Tim.	
Marshall, Ian.	
Mulherin, Michelle.	
Naughton, Hildegarde.	

Neville, Tom.	
O'Sullivan, Grace.	
Ryan, Eamon.	
Sherlock, Sean.	

Question declared carried.

**Chairman:** We have one other amendment in this section, which is-----

**Deputy Sean Sherlock:** I made a point about June 2019. We voted on the amendment. Has that been changed to July?

**Chairman:** Is that an issue for members?

**Deputy Sean Sherlock:** I thought that was agreed.

**Chairman:** It is agreed.

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** It might never happen.

**Deputy Brian Stanley:** Is the next amendment on this chapter?

**Chairman:** Yes, we are staying on this chapter. We are on amendment No. 29.

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** I thought it was amendment No. 49.

**Chairman:** Perhaps it is a different number on the Deputy's documents. It is amendment No. 29 on page 49. We have already discussed this. It reads:

The committee recommends that the Department of Finance commission an inquiry into the revenue that could be realised through the introduction of a carbon tax on the profits of corporations and firms directly linked to the production and sale of gas, oil, coal and other fossil fuels. That inquiry should also look at the revenue that could be realised from the imposition of a carbon tax and the profits of other corporations and firms linked to high usage of fossil fuels, including aviation, shipping etc.

We discussed this matter earlier, and Deputy Bríd Smith made-----

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** I believe we have not analysed this enough at all in this committee - I am keen to put that on the record. We have spent days, if not weeks, agonising about a carbon tax on the population but only a tiny amount of time really analysing what could be done. This could be the leap forward or the magnanimous step that we need to take to realise what is going on according to the IPCC, the United Nations and the International Energy Agency. However, we have hardly looked at it.

**Deputy Eamon Ryan:** Can I comment?

**Chairman:** Briefly, Deputy. I am conscious of the time and people have commitments.

**Deputy Eamon Ryan:** I support it. As I said in the discussion last night, we introduced such a tax in our time in government. Unfortunately, there was a problem at the Supreme Court. I believe we should go back and look at that experience. The problem was a technicality in the courts, as I recall it. I agree that such a report or inquiry would be useful. If that mechanism is

not possible then we should look at some other way. I support it.

**Chairman:** We have a vote. I am jumping ahead a little but I am keen to conclude our work - we are nearly done. After this there are two textual amendments. Recommendations Nos. 1 and 15 relate to the text in the chapters. If there are votes to be called, they should be called at the same time as this recommendation and the two textual amendments so that we are not calling eight minute votes every time. Is that agreed? Agreed. We have to suspend while there is a vote in the Dáil. We will come back after the Dáil vote and go straight into these votes and finalise the report.

*Sitting suspended at 5.10 p.m. and resumed at 6 p.m.*

**Chairman:** The question is that the new priority amendment No. 29 in the name of Deputy Bríd Smith be agreed to.

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** I am tired, as everybody else is, and appreciate the Chairman's work. She has been extraordinarily patient, decent and flexible. I would like to have a debate on this amendment as I would like to hear what those who oppose a tax on the profits of the carbon and fossil fuel industry have to say as I have never heard what they have to say about it. I know that they will vote against it, but somebody here should speak up.

**Chairman:** I have no problem if somebody wants to address it, but there was a discussion yesterday on the taxation of profits.

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** It was related to the profits of the agri-industry. I understand the sensitivity attached to agriculture for many Deputies, but the amendment relates to fossil fuel production. It goes to the heart of the global problem and the notion of keeping fossil fuels in the ground so as not to burn carbon. I argue as well and as often as I can for this movement. I can do so again, but, with due respect to the nature of this discussion and discourse, I would like to hear the arguments against the amendment.

**Deputy Sean Sherlock:** Who is to say we will vote against the amendment? I say put it.

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** And then have the argument.

**Deputy Sean Sherlock:** The Deputy has made the case for her amendment and it is now 6 p.m. on Thursday.

**Chairman:** I know that members have commitments. The standing committee will continue. We have to agree to its terms of reference in private session which will be very short. We will have a number of votes. We will then conclude and publish the report. That could be done within the next ten or 15 minutes if members are agreeable.

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** I respectfully ask anybody who is opposed to the amendment to tell me why he or she is opposed to it. If members are not opposed to it, that is great as we will pass it with a large majority.

**Chairman:** We will take the next few votes one after the other as agreed to before the vote in the Dáil.

Question put.

The Committee divided: Tá, 12; Níl, 8.
--

Tá;	Níl;
Butler, Mary.	Brophy, Colm.
Chambers, Jack.	Corcoran Kennedy, Marcella.
Daly, Paul.	Heydon, Martin.
Devine, Máire.	Lombard, Tim.
Dooley, Timmy.	Marshall, Ian.
Munster, Imelda.	Mulherin, Michelle.
O'Sullivan, Grace.	Naughton, Hildegarde.
Pringle, Thomas.	Neville, Tom.
Ryan, Eamon.	
Sherlock, Sean.	
Smith, Bríd.	
Stanley, Brian.	

Question declared .

**Chairman:** On the question, “That Chapter 6, as amended, be agreed to,” a division has been challenged and will be taken now.

Question put.

The Committee divided: Tá;, 16; Níl, 4.	
Tá;	Níl;
Brophy, Colm.	Devine, Máire.
Butler, Mary.	Munster, Imelda.
Chambers, Jack.	Smith, Bríd.
Corcoran Kennedy, Marcella.	Stanley, Brian.
Daly, Paul.	
Dooley, Timmy.	
Heydon, Martin.	
Lombard, Tim.	
Marshall, Ian.	
Mulherin, Michelle.	
Naughton, Hildegarde.	
Neville, Tom.	
O'Sullivan, Grace.	
Pringle, Thomas.	
Ryan, Eamon.	
Sherlock, Sean.	

Question declared carried.

**Chairman:** We will move to consider the minor text changes. Amendments Nos. 1 and

15 are in the name of Deputy Bríd Smith. Amendment No. 1 proposes, on page 6, line 166, to delete the word “poor” and replace it with “appalling”. Amendment No. 15 proposes, on page 39, line 1367, after “shall arise from continued climate change” to insert “Meanwhile, corporations are being allowed to accrue vast profits from the production and extraction of fossil fuels without reference to the long-term costs being imposed on society”.

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** I will say a quick word about the amendments. The replacement of the word “poor” with “appalling” is significant because it is in chapter 1 which is the preamble in the whole context in which we are having this long debate and scrutiny of what is going on and how we adjust to climate change. If we are to be really honest and show leadership, to young people in particular, we have to say we are not just poor but awful in dealing with carbon emissions. Use of the word “appalling” is appropriate in that context.

Amendment No. 15 is much more appropriate now that the amendment providing for an investigation into the taxes paid by and the profits of the fossil fuels industry has been carried. It is very appropriate that amendment No. 15 be made to the text considering this change which I was not expecting and which was due to Fianna Fáil supporting the earlier amendment.

**Deputy Timmy Dooley:** There is a recognition that we are trying to move away from fossil fuels. However, there is also a recognition that we need fossil fuels as part of the transition. I am a little concerned that there is over-demonisation. I know where we need to get to and how we should get there, but I do not think this language would add anything. It was suggested we were appealing to the kids, but actually we are not.

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** About which amendment is the Deputy talking?

**Deputy Timmy Dooley:** I am talking about both of them. I could not care less whether the word “poor” or “appalling” is used. On to whom or what we are sending a signal, this is a report that will go to the Government from Members of the Oireachtas who are seeking to have stuff done. That may be the reason the report has been allowed to become too broad, but I do not have a view on the matter one way or the other. I just think we should try to wrap it up.

Amendment No. 15 seems to suggest there is a conspiracy in the use of the phrase “being allowed to accrue”. Deputy Bríd Smith might believe there is.

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** It is not a conspiracy; it is the system.

**Deputy Timmy Dooley:** We are getting into the ideology of the economic systems in which we reside. For that reason, I am content in saying we need to fix and change the system in place. Creating bogeymen in the form of the big oil companies is not necessarily the way to go. We need to show the pathway to change. I am more interested in looking at how we can get from where we are to where we need to be. Deputy Bríd Smith was not prepared to accept some of the other measures proposed.

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** That is not fair. I accepted lots of measures. I have accepted so many it is unbelievable. A lot of the stuff I wanted was changed by way of the advisers meeting each other and saying, “Get that out and put that in.” I am coming back to it now and asking for contextual changes.

**Deputy Sean Sherlock:** I do not want anybody to mischaracterise the role of the advisers in this process. I want to be very clear that they have played an extremely beneficial role. Had it not been for my own, Anja Murray, I would have been at a serious loss in the work the commit-

tee has done. I do not want people to have the impression that the advisers were anything less than courteous and professional and that they sought to work together even when there were significant differences of opinion in respect of policy issues.

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** I fully accept-----

**Chairman:** There are a number of speakers on this. I call Deputy Heydon.

**Deputy Martin Heydon:** I concur with Deputy Sherlock. With the exception of yesterday, this is the first time we have been in public session since January. The public would not be aware of the detailed work of every member of the committee, greatly assisted by our advisers because it is so technical and because of the range of issues involved. I record our appreciation of all the advisers. Just as we have done, they have worked across party divides as far possible in an attempt to reach consensus.

The point Deputy Bríd Smith is making about large corporations just feeds into the narrative of those who are opposed to any increase in carbon pricing needing a bogeyman. I have heard the phrase “ordinary people” many times and it jars with me every time. It is as if I did not represent ordinary people, as if every member of this committee did not represent ordinary people and as if some people had a monopoly on caring for the poor, vulnerable and weak. We are all in politics to help people. We might have a different approach to how we do that. In order to have the view that there is no need for carbon taxes, they need to claim there are rich people or there is a pot of money somewhere so that ordinary people do not have to make any contribution along the way. That narrative is just not true.

**Senator Tim Lombard:** We have gone through a unique process, involving the advisers giving input at a very early stage. We have all learned much from the advisers and any criticism of the advisers at this stage is unfortunate. Other committees should look at the process and how we got essential technical input to make these decisions.

We are trying to ensure we have fair play across the board and I do not believe the amendment has any standing.

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** I publicly apologise for the impression given to the advisers that I somehow disrespect them; I do not at all. My intent was to show that the advisers are there to reflect what those whom they are advising want in the report. I do not think any of them would disagree with that. They have to reflect what the parties on whose behalf they are working want in the report, as my adviser has attempted to do for me. This is the reference to “poor” was a political decision by those they represent to minimise the language used and make Ireland not look so bad when it comes to climate change. Our record is appalling but if members want to use the word “poor” that is fair enough. In Deputy Heydon’s contribution, I have had an answer as to why there is opposition to putting a tax on the profits of the fossil fuel companies. I tried to get that answer earlier on, but I am very grateful to get that answer now.

I have no disrespect whatsoever for the advisers and all the work they have done. I disrespect the political views of some of the people around the table, but that is life.

**Chairman:** Is the Deputy pressing the two amendments?

**Deputy Bríd Smith:** Yes.

**Chairman:** Is it agreed to take the two together? Agreed. We do not need to ring the bells

as we are all here.

Question put.

The Committee divided: Tá;, 7; Níl, 13.	
Tá;	Níl;
Devine, Máire.	Brophy, Colm.
Munster, Imelda.	Butler, Mary.
O’Sullivan, Grace.	Chambers, Jack.
Pringle, Thomas.	Corcoran Kennedy, Marcella.
Ryan, Eamon.	Daly, Paul.
Smith, Bríd.	Dooley, Timmy.
Stanley, Brian.	Heydon, Martin.
	Lombard, Tim.
	Marshall, Ian.
	Mulherin, Michelle.
	Naughton, Hildegard.
	Neville, Tom.
	Sherlock, Sean.

Question declared lost.

Question proposed: “That the report be the report of the committee and that it be laid before both Houses of the Oireachtas.”

**Deputy Brian Stanley:** May I make a comment?

**Chairman:** Very briefly.

**Deputy Brian Stanley:** The overall report has some very good content.

**Chairman:** I really do not want everyone to come back in again. Members have had an opportunity.

**Deputy Brian Stanley:** I just want to finish my sentence.

**Chairman:** Within ten seconds.

**Deputy Brian Stanley:** We will be voting against the report because of chapter 6 and the inclusion of carbon tax. We will be launching an alternative minority report.

**Chairman:** I will proceed because we are working on the current report before us that we have worked on for the past seven months.

Question put.

The Committee divided: Tá;, 16; Níl, 4.	
Tá;	Níl;
Brophy, Colm.	Devine, Máire.

Butler, Mary.	Munster, Imelda.
Chambers, Jack.	Smith, Bríd.
Corcoran Kennedy, Marcella.	Stanley, Brian.
Daly, Paul.	
Dooley, Timmy.	
Heydon, Martin.	
Lombard, Tim.	
Marshall, Ian.	
Mulherin, Michelle.	
Naughton, Hildegarde.	
Neville, Tom.	
O'Sullivan, Grace.	
Pringle, Thomas.	
Ryan, Eamon.	
Sherlock, Sean.	

Question declared .

**Chairman:** On behalf of the committee I express my sincere gratitude to all the committee members who have worked so constructively and positively over the past seven months. I know we were in public session today and yesterday, but we have worked very well together. I also thank the members of the secretariat, led by Mr. Ted McEnery, who have done fantastic work. All of this work goes unnoticed under the radar. I also thank all the advisers sitting in the Gallery who have done Trojan work. They have put in hours of work behind the scenes and have worked with us constructively - all parties and none. I also thank all the witnesses who appeared before the committee and in particular the members of the Citizens' Assembly, without whose work we would not be completing this cross-party report. This is a unique report, the first of its kind on climate change by the Oireachtas. It is a first but important step. I look forward to working with members on the standing committee.

**Deputy Mary Butler:** I reiterate what you have said, Chairman. On behalf of every member here - I am sure we are all in agreement - I congratulate you, as Chairman. It is not an easy job. You were always very fair and balanced. You drove the committee along at a nice pace. Well done.

**Deputy Brian Stanley:** I echo those words. The way you have handled it over the past eight months has been very good, Chairman. You have been very balanced and fair the way you handled the discussion and led the committee.

**Chairman:** I appreciate those comments. I could not have done it without the committee members. Let us go forward for climate change and climate action.

We need to go into private session briefly to agree the terms of our standing committee.

The joint committee went into private session at 6.30 p.m. and adjourned at 6.35 p.m. *sine die*.