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PUBLIC SECTOR LEADERSHIP ON THE GLOBAL CLIMATE EMERGENCY

As recognised by the First Minister, COSLA and local authorities, and public bodies across Scotland, there is a global climate emergency, and this emergency has not gone away. Despite the unprecedented challenge of COVID-19, Scotland remains committed to ending our contribution to climate change within a generation. This year the world is looking to Scotland's leadership on climate action as Glasgow hosts the COP 26 climate summit in November marking the most important moment of the international climate challenge since the Paris Agreement in 2015.

Scotland has set one of the most robust legislative frameworks for emissions reduction in the world, with a commitment to a just transition where no one is left behind. We are committed to a green recovery from COVID-19 in which we capture the opportunities of green jobs, business growth, prosperity and wellbeing. Our updated Climate Change Plan, published in December, sets out the bold actions that chart our pathway to a green recovery and includes more than 100 new policies and increased ambition for more than 40 others.

COVID-19 continues to profoundly impact all of us, and Scottish Ministers are deeply grateful to the public sector for your huge efforts in safeguarding our communities, protecting our National Health Service and saving lives. We also need to continue to work together to safeguard our planet's future, so I am writing to secure your continued leadership and support in the shared national endeavour to deliver a just transition to a 75% emissions reduction by 2030 and Scotland's world-leading goal of net zero emissions by 2045.

Since 2009, Scotland's public bodies have been legally required to act in the way best calculated to contribute to the delivery of our emissions reduction targets and you can be proud of the leadership role you have played in helping achieve a 50% cut in national greenhouse gas emissions. Public bodies are the frontline of our climate emergency response, with many already going well beyond their legislative duties to drive action and influence change across society. Public bodies are also central to Scotland's preparedness for the challenges that we will face as our climate continues to change.

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The Scottish Ministers are committed to working closely with our partners in COSLA, local government and the wider public sector, to support leadership on climate change. Our Programme for Government 2020-2021 has committed to at least £95 million over the next Parliament to support the decarbonisation of the public sector estate, and commits to action on the climate impact of the £12.6 billion of annual public procurement. Transport Scotland's Switched on Fleets scheme has been supporting the decarbonisation of public sector vehicle fleets.

Following consultation in 2019, we have already delivered our Programme for Government commitment to strengthen our legislative framework through new regulations laid in Parliament which will support public bodies' leadership role. The consultation showed strong support for public sector bodies being required to set targets for when they will achieve zero direct emissions, and for reduced indirect emissions. The Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2020 sets out that public bodies will be required to provide in their annual reports:

- where applicable, the body's target date for achieving zero direct emissions of greenhouse gases, or such other targets that demonstrate how the body is contributing to Scotland achieving its emissions reduction targets;
- where applicable, targets for reducing indirect emissions of greenhouse gases;
- how the body will align its spending plans and use of resources to contribute to reducing emissions and delivering its emissions reduction targets;
- how the body will publish, or otherwise make available, its progress to achieving its emissions reduction targets; and
- where applicable, what contribution the body has made to helping deliver Scotland's Climate Change Adaptation Programme.

The new requirements apply from the report year ending on 31 March 2022 onwards. Further detailed guidance will be issued by the Scottish Government by April 2021.

As Scotland emerges from COVID-19, we have a chance to build a greener, fairer and more equal society and economy. A green recovery will deliver economic, social and environmental wellbeing and respond to the twin challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss. I am grateful for your continued strong leadership and support in the national endeavour to tackle the global climate emergency.

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