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Dear Committee Members,

## LETTER IN RESPONSE TO THE CALL FOR VIEWS ON THE CLIMATE CHANGE PLAN UPDATE

As the Convener of Transport, Environment and Rural Affairs (TERA) Committee and Trustee at the Scottish Youth Parliament, I am writing to you to formally record the views of young people on your Call for Views on the Climate Change Plan Update. The Scottish Youth Parliament has collected young people's views and experiences through a number of consultations, including *From Scotland's Young People - SYP's 2021-2026 Youth Manifesto*, our *Pack It Up, Pack It In* and *All Aboard* campaigns, and Members' and Committee Motions submitted at SYP sittings.

I hope that you can relay these views to your colleagues, and please do contact us if you have any further questions or wish to update us on how you will take these views forward.

The Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) is the democratic voice of Scotland's young people. Our vision for Scotland is of a nation that actively listens to and values the meaningful participation of its young people. Our goal is to make this vision a reality, in order to ensure young people in Scotland grow up loved, safe and respected, and able to realise their full potential. SYP is a rights-based charity, with members supported by all of Scotland's 32 local authorities and 11 National Voluntary Organisations. Our democratically elected members listen to and recognise the issues that are most important to young people in every community across the country and ensure that decision-makers listen to their voices.

**'Children and young people's rights should be at the forefront of decisions made during the COVID-19 crisis and recovery process.'** (*From Scotland's Young People manifesto statement - 68.5% agree*)

The above statements from our *From Scotland's Young People Manifesto* underpins SYP's attitude towards including the voice of Scotland's young people in this call for views. It is essential that action is taken to ensure young people are not unfairly disadvantaged by steps to deliver a green recovery at a national and local level. It is clear that Scotland's response to the COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on the rights of children and young people and in line with Scotland's commitment to uphold young people's rights, it is essential that young people are actively consulted, engaged, and involved in any actions taken to deliver an effective green recovery.

Following the COVID-19 Pandemic, a green recovery is a priority for the Scottish Youth Parliament and I am delighted to see that it has been placed right at the heart of the updated plan. It's very encouraging to us that the ideals of our government correlate so heavily with our own. The Climate Change Plan Update is very thorough and I believe it well demonstrates Scotland's commitment to tackling the environmental emergency we face globally. It has also

adapted efficiently to the challenges presented to us by the pandemic, as well as acknowledging that the climate crisis remains a top priority. Our recent manifesto policy regarding the climate emergency reflects how and the urgency at which this should be addressed.

**‘The global climate emergency is an issue of climate justice, where those who contribute least to greenhouse gas emissions are most impacted. Countries most responsible for greenhouse gas emissions must...**

- **Be the first to reduce their emissions. (75.4% agree)**
- **Share benefits of their increased wealth and development with those countries most impacted by climate change. (71.4% agree)**
- **Compensate loss and damage incurred in less developed countries as a result of climate change by contributing finances to a global fund, supporting research and working on international cooperation.’ (69.9% agree)**

In response to a previous call for views from the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform committee regarding the green recovery (available at <https://bit.ly/3s2HKsc>), a focus group was carried out with seven members of SYP’s Conveners Group to discuss this inquiry. These young people agreed funding is required for:

- Sustainable energy, industry, and business.
- Education and training.
- Supporting industries to shift to more sustainable business practices.
- Active travel and public transport.
- Active engagement with young people on climate change, and for teacher training.

**‘Transport Scotland and the Scottish Government should provide funding to support initiatives which make it easier, cheaper, and safer for young people to use active and sustainable travel options.’ (From Scotland’s Young People manifesto statement - 89.0% agree)**

Sustainable travel has always been an important issue for SYP’s Transport, Environment and Rural Affairs (TERA) committee, but recently we have looked into promoting active travel and its benefits more heavily. I agree that achieving Net Zero does require a serious cultural shift as a nation and encouraging healthy and green active travel opportunities is going to be integral in reaching that goal. However, SYP would also like to advocate for more education towards environmental awareness in order to inspire more progress towards this cultural shift, showing that the overall benefits of active travel will outweigh its personal inconveniences.

**‘All young people in Scotland should receive improved practical environmental awareness education, and be empowered to take action to live more sustainably. To help achieve this, the Scottish Government and Education Scotland should take a human rights based approach when implementing the ‘Learning for Sustainability (LfS) Action Plan’, by meaningfully including children and young people in the design and delivery of LfS programmes.’ (Pack it up, Pack it in campaign recommendation)**

Active engagement with young people on climate change and environmental issues which they are passionate about is another less formal way in which this education could be popularised. Social media campaigns and partnerships with youth work charities will help spread awareness of new policies and initiatives.

**‘The Scottish Youth Parliament believes that Transport Scotland and the Scottish Government should review the existing concessionary discount on public transport, available to 16-18 year olds through the Young Scot National Entitlement Card, to expand the concession to include all young people (up to their 26<sup>th</sup> birthday) at no cost to young people across all public transport networks.’** (*All Aboard campaign recommendation*)

Our 2018 campaign, *All Aboard*, aimed ‘To improve young people’s experience of public transport in Scotland’. To achieve this aim, the campaign focused on three themes: Reducing Fares, Accessibility and Bus Standards. Cost of public transport was highlighted as one of the main deterrents for young people, with nearly one third (31.5%) of young people who responded to this question saying they would use the bus more regularly if it was cheaper, or if there were promotions or higher concessionary discounts.

**‘The possibility of discounted or free transport should be explored for groups who struggle to access travel such as carers, Armed Forces young people, and those in recovery from drug and alcohol addiction.’** (*From Scotland’s Young People manifesto statement - 79.2% agree*)

Ferries are also a major topic of discussion for the TERA committee as we represent all young people, including those from island communities who use for travel to mainland Scotland or between islands. We recognise that 30% of Scottish Government owned ferries will be low emission by 2032, but we would also encourage an inquiry into discounted fares for there to be an incentive for increased use.

**‘The Scottish Youth Parliament calls on ferry operators to introduce a discounted fare for people who use ferries as an essential method of transport.’** (*Members’ Motion by Cameron Garrett MSYP (passed 26<sup>th</sup> October 2020) - 92% agree*)

In 2019, our *Pack it up, Pack it in* Campaign aimed to empower young people to speak out and take action to reduce pollution levels in Scotland. The campaign concentrated on reducing pollution levels which contribute to climate change, and on finding out young people’s views and experiences of litter, single-use packaging, and recycling in Scotland. Recommendations from the campaign report state that **‘local authorities and the Scottish Government should make funding and support available for young people and other community groups to carry out local projects to reduce the impact of littering and increase community pride in their local area’** and that **‘more should be done to raise awareness amongst young people to help them understand what can be recycled, and when recycling is collected, in their communities’**.

**‘The Scottish Youth Parliament believes that local and national governments should invest more in infrastructure and opportunities for young people in rural communities, to help tackle rural isolation and improve mental health outcomes.’** (*Members’ Motion by Sarah Quinn MSYP (passed 21<sup>st</sup> March 2020) - 91% agree*)

I believe that thought should be placed into how new policies and amendments to the climate change plan would affect young people’s job prospects, especially in rural areas. Rural life should be improved for the young people of Scotland through better internet access, more affordable housing, more frequent and affordable transport, rural job creation and promotion, and more education opportunities in rural communities. We encourage more rural based work opportunities and apprenticeships with an emphasis on environmentally friendly work. There should also be an effort made to promote employability within the transport sector with a sustainable focus.

**‘The right to food should be upheld in Scotland by creating a fair, healthy and sustainable food system that is accessible to everyone.’** *(From Scotland’s Young People manifesto statement - 90.4% agree)*

The encouragement of a healthy diet and reducing food waste is another topic on which we have many manifesto commitments. Findings which were highlighted in our 2021-2026 manifesto, *From Scotland’s Young People* states that the **‘food and retail industry should make it possible to recycle and reuse packaging’** (93.5% agree), **‘avoid using too much packaging in their products’** (90.7% agree), and **‘rely less on packaging made out of plastic’** (89.3% agree).

If you require any more information about the Scottish Youth Parliament, the work of our Committee or any previous campaigns or consultations, please feel free to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

**Mollie McGoran MSYP**

MSYP for Caithness, Sutherland and Ross

Convener of the Transport, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee

Trustee for National Campaigns and Conveners Group