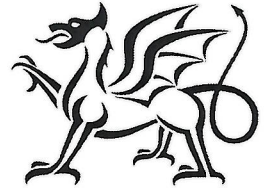


Lesley Griffiths AC/AM  
Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd, Ynni a Materion Gwledig  
Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-869  
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/06610/19

Janet Finch-Saunders AM  
Chair, Petitions Committee

[SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales](mailto:SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales)

12 August 2019

Dear Janet

Thank you for your letter of 29 July regarding *Petition P-05-869: Declare a climate emergency*. You asked for the Welsh Government's response to the petitioners' call to establish citizens' assemblies.

We believe increasing our efforts to tackle climate change means fostering greater collaboration across our society and we want people in Wales to play a key role in that challenge by bringing forward new ideas and initiatives. The Welsh Government provides practical and financial support to people across Wales to take direct action to tackle climate change and strengthen the resilience of our ecosystems through policy initiatives such as our Energy Service and the Enabling Natural Resources and Wellbeing Grants. Where groups of citizens come together to drive action on climate change, this government is listening and working with them to make it happen. The National Assembly for Wales and our other democratic institutions also play a vital role in listening to and advocating for Welsh citizens.

We believe there can be a role for citizens' assemblies to make a valuable contribution to this agenda. For the public to engage in a citizens' assembly, they must be confident the process is both genuinely independent and their voice will be heard. For these reasons we believe citizens' assemblies are most effective when established on a cross-party, parliamentary basis. This is the case, for example, in the citizens' assembly convened in Ireland in recent years and the citizens' assembly on climate change being held this year as a joint exercise by six House of Commons select committees.

The petitioners' demands align closely with those of Extinction Rebellion (XR). The First Minister met members of XR on 5 August. He has invited XR to the Welsh Government's climate change conference in October to share and discuss ideas about how we could accelerate specific decarbonisation targets. The First Minister also committed political support to XR's idea of a citizens' assembly to explore what action is needed in response to the climate emergency declaration.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The Committee has also asked for “further information, including a timescale, about the review of actions in *Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales*”. The policies and proposals in the plan make provision for continuous review, as well as informing the development of the second carbon budget and plan. We will publish the second plan before the end of 2021.

Since publishing the first plan and declaring a climate emergency we have established a permanent Cabinet Sub-Committee to provide impetus from the ministerial level. We have reached a number of policy milestones which represent major reviews of government policy, as reflected in *Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales*. They also represent opportunities for Assembly Members and all Welsh citizens to help to shape future policy in these areas. The following milestones have all been reached since the declaration of a climate emergency on 29 April:

- Publishing proposals for future financial support for agriculture after Brexit.
- Publishing proposals for future marine management after Brexit, including the implementation of sustainable management practices, focusing on improving the resilience of marine ecosystems.
- Completing a consultation on environmental principles and governance after Brexit and creating a group of key stakeholders to take forward this work over the summer.
- Committing to bringing forward new restrictions on the sale of single use plastics, and to implementing the provisions of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 to require businesses to separate their waste to ensure all recyclable materials are not wasted.
- Publishing the recommendations from the Decarbonisation of Homes Wales Advisory Group, with a full government response due this autumn.
- Committing to driving further decarbonisation and energy efficiency through the rollout of the empty homes grant scheme across the Valleys taskforce area.
- Committing to prioritising the zero carbon economy in regional investment after Brexit, along with inequality, business competitiveness, and healthier and more sustainable communities.
- Publishing proposals on the new curriculum for Wales, which includes helping learners to become ethical and informed citizens of Wales and the world as one of the curriculum’s four central purposes.

Additionally, since the climate emergency declaration we have announced more than £60m to support a wide range of initiatives that deliver on the objectives of *Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales*, with almost £20m additional funding secured from the European Union. These include support for active travel, tackling biodiversity loss and wider ecosystem resilience, low carbon innovation in industry, the development of a world-leading marine energy sector and supporting community action on reducing waste and protecting local species and habitats.

Regards  
Lesley

**Lesley Griffiths AC/AM**

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