



## Circular Economy Bill: Stage 3 briefing

### Introduction

Moving towards a more circular economy is important and urgent. Our dominant linear economic system is wasteful and polluting and has a huge impact on climate and nature. Globally, about 90% of biodiversity loss can be attributed to resource extraction and processing and, in Scotland, about 80% of our carbon footprint is from emissions embedded in goods we use and consume. Material Flow Accounts show that in Scotland our material consumption is about triple what is considered to be a sustainable amount. Reducing our consumption of raw materials, through wasting less and reusing the materials we already have, will help Scotland reach its climate and nature commitments.

The Circular Economy Bill provides the legislative framework to drive Scotland's economy to be more circular. Scottish Environment LINK members welcome the Bill and amendments brought forward at Stage 2, but believe that the Bill must be strengthened further to maximise its environmental and social benefits.

### Amendments recommended for support

**LINK members have been working on improving a number of aspects of the bill with MSPs. These are our priority areas and the associated amendments:**

- **Product stewardship, focusing on takeback and refill:** Amendment 44 in the name of Mark Ruskell MSP would require Ministers to consider these issues when devising their strategy, and this process would be strengthened if Amendment 44A from Maurice Golden MSP is backed by Parliament. Amendment 71 in the name of Gillian Mackay MSP, on powers to ban single-use vapes and institute takeback schemes for them is positive, although we would like to see all vapes covered by such a takeback scheme, potentially under the UK Environment Act 2020.
- **Circularity reporting for those in receipt of public funding:** Amendment 80 from Mark Ruskell MSP would bring in a light-touch circularity requirement for companies and other bodies in receipt of public funds, with exemption levels to be set by the enterprise agencies et al: this was recommended in ECCLR's 2020 Green Recovery Report.
- **Public sector circularity plans:** Amendment 99 in the name of Maurice Golden MSP would introduce a requirement on public bodies to set out how their work will contribute to the national circular economy strategy, originally part of the 2019 Circular Economy Bill proposals.
- **Education and skills:** Amendment 43 in the name of Mark Ruskell MSP requires the circular economy strategy to consider the education and skills needed to meet its



objectives. Education and skills underpin a transition to a circular economy and must be developed to increase understanding of, and the skills required by, a circular economy.

- **Prioritising sectors and systems:** Amendments 66 and 68 in the name of Ben Macpherson add criteria to be used in identifying sectors and systems to be included in the circular economy strategy and in setting targets. Criteria include reaching net zero; the life-cycle carbon impacts of goods, products and materials; and the wider environmental impact of sectors and systems.
- **Critical Minerals:** Amendments 31 and 33, in the name of Mark Ruskell MSP, requires the Circular Economy strategy to include improvement plans for critical minerals for the Scottish energy sector, and defines 'critical minerals' as those materials vital to the transition away from fossil fuels.
- **Reducing life-cycle carbon emissions:** Amendments 40, 41, 42, 46, 47 and 48, in the name of Mark Ruskell MSP, add the reduction of whole lifecycle carbon emissions associated with goods, products and materials to the characteristics of a circular economy that the development of the strategy and setting of targets should aim for.
- **Reducing international impacts (due diligence):** Amendments 72 and 77, in the name of Monica Lennon MSP, require the strategy and targets to consider human rights and environmental impacts in supply chains. Amendment 73, in the name of Bob Doris MSP, requires international impacts to be considered in the strategy. Amendment 52, in the name of Maurice Golden MSP, requires public bodies to adopt due diligence measures.
- **Just transition:** Amendment 96, in the name of Sarah Boyack MSP, requires just transition principles to be considered in the strategy more completely than the current version of the bill. Amendment 74, in the name of Monica Lennon MSP, ensures social-economic inequalities are considered in the bill. Amendment 28, in the name of Maurice Golden MSP, inserts a purpose clause which defines the circular economy to include just transition principles and other measures.

**In addition, there are other amendments that we particularly support:**

- Amendments 93 (Sarah Boyack), 65 (Maurice Golden) 67 (Maurice Golden) which relate to reducing the practice of exporting waste.
- Amendment 95 (Monica Lennon) which highlights the preference for reusable items.
- Amendments 34, 35 (Graham Simpson) which prioritise the reuse of and maximisation of social impact of unsold goods.
- Amendments 50, 51, 52, 69, 70 (Maurice Golden) 10, 36 (Graham Simpson) which are related to setting recycling targets.



- Amendments 58, 59 (Maurice Golden), 102, 103 (Monica Lennon) which relate to the local authority code of practice and highlight reuse and repair and 21, 37 (Graham Simpson) relate to specifying recycling streams in that code.
- Amendments 104 (Monica Lennon) which promotes reuse and 105 (Monica Lennon) which requires Local Authorities to provide access to reusable nappies.

This briefing represents the collective view of those members of LINK's Sustainable Economy Group who work on circular economy:

Action to Protect Rural Scotland (APRS)

Fidra

Friends of the Earth Scotland

Keep Scotland Beautiful

Marine Conservation Society

Scottish Environment LINK is the forum for Scotland's voluntary environment community, with over 35 member bodies representing a broad spectrum of environmental interests with the common goal of contributing to a more environmentally sustainable society.

**For more information contact:**

Phoebe Cochrane

Sustainable Economy Officer

[phoebe@scotlink.org](mailto:phoebe@scotlink.org)