

Submission to the Committee on C-12:

This morning we listened to a webcast in which IPCC scientist, Corinne Le Quere, spoke about her role on the UK Climate Change Committee (the CCC). We took some notes that we would like to share with you:

Le Quere feels that Bill C-12 is a step in the right direction, but it needs two things changed:

- The act does not have the sense of urgency required to meet our targets. The evaluation every five years is not ambitious enough. There needs to be milestone targets all along the way. The advisory committee in the UK (the CCC) reports every June and recommends modifications etc. It has a staff of at least 25 full-time people (up to 40 when required) to do the leg work required to help the CCC members do a thorough and widely distributed report. These people also keep the work of the committee front and centre all year long in the national media (there is a whole communications department). It is a much talked of effort.
- Bill C-12's Advisory Body as it stands now is not independent enough. She said that the UK Act has a transparent monitoring framework and Canada needs one too. In Bill C-12, the responsibility of reporting on progress toward meeting targets is assigned to the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development. She suggests that the Commissioner should be independent of the government.

We were impressed by something she explained – that the UK CCC does the work in a non-partisan way, based on science and independent modelling. This has helped resolve political differences. The committee says things that, in her words “break the ice”. The government, as well as everyone else, must heed its advice and compliance must be legally binding.

In summary, she explained that the UK Climate Change Act of 2008 has had big results. The UK has decreased its emissions by 28% in the last 10 years. The secret to its success is that includes legally binding, evidence-based five year carbon budgets, set many years in advance but monitored yearly and developed by a truly independent, expert panel.

Perhaps you are already consulting experts like Corinne Le Quere. We recommend her highly. What we have highlighted here lacks detail and is by no means the sum total of what she discussed. However, we wanted you all to know that we liked what we were hearing.

She commented that Canada can benefit from the experience of others (such as the UK) in developing strong policy frameworks – they really help get the job done.

Thank you for your attention to this critical piece of legislation. Our future depends on it.

Valerie Endicott and Stephen Douglas