

Scottish Parliament report calls for urgent action on zero-carbon public transport

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Prioritising electrification of the rail network so there are as few gaps as possible is among the list of recommendations for the Scottish Government by a cross-party group which is looking to reduce transport emissions.

The Sustainable Transport Cross Party Group (CPC) has published its findings into decarbonising Scotland's fleets of buses, trains and ferries. It has found that a country-wide transition to zero-carbon public transport would allow the country to become both self-sufficient and a net exporter of alternative fuels and associated skills and expertise.

The inquiry was conducted in response to widespread concerns that progress against the government's climate targets is falling behind.

The key themes emerging from the evidence presented to the inquiry were:

- The need for clear and consistent policy signals and financial incentives.
- The role of decarbonisation in assisting with modal shift objectives.

-How ending fossil fuel reliance in public transport will benefit Scotland's low-carbon industrial strategy.

-The need to enhance knowledge-sharing amongst operators and industries.

Writing in the report, Graham Simpson MSP, Convenor of the CPG on Sustainable Transport, said:
"Scotland is not doing well enough to decarbonise transport, though progress is being made and we recognise that. But patting ourselves on the back is not going to get the job done."

The Scottish Government has committed to cutting the nation's total greenhouse gas emissions by more than 50 per cent in the next seven years, before reaching net zero by 2045.

David Clarke, from Railway Industry Association (RIA) Scotland, which gave evidence to the report, said:
"Representing RIA Scotland, Lee Pounder of SPL Powerlines and I were pleased to give evidence to the Cross Party Group and contribute to the report.

"We welcome the call for a rolling programme of electrification as part of an updated Rail Services Decarbonisation Plan as the most efficient way to decarbonise Scotland's Railway.

"We recognise the current fiscal challenges faced by the Scottish Government but urge the maintenance of investment in rail to ensure current skills and capability levels can be sustained otherwise there is a risk these will be lost."

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