



# Planet Before Profit

A Manifesto for  
Radical Climate Action

**PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT**

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Radical Climate Action



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## About People Before Profit

People Before Profit was created to fight for a fairer, more equal society. We value the welfare of communities above wealth creation for the few.

People Before Profit see the mobilisation of people in workplaces and communities as the key to bringing about change. We believe change can be won by fighting for our interests collectively.

Join us to help build a society that works for the many, not the few.

## Our TDs



**Bríd Smith**



**Richard Boyd Barrett**



**Gino Kenny**



# Key Proposals

## Agriculture

1. Take the major agri-corporations into public ownership and use their resources to help finance a **Just Transition** for farmers and rural Ireland.
2. Implement a major afforestation and rewilding programme, and offer farmers €3,000 per annum for every hectare used for Co2 absorption.
3. Reduce the dairy herd by 50% and compensate farmers with a New Green Payment.



## Transport

1. Move rapidly to free public transport.
2. Impose a pollution tax on airline corporations.
3. Invest in cycle lanes and electrify the rail network.



## Clean Energy

1. Close all coal and peat-fired power stations immediately – retrain staff on full pay.
2. Create a state-owned renewable energy company to create 90% of Irish electricity from renewables by 2030.
3. Open the grid to micro-generators and engage local communities in the planning of wind energy infrastructure.



## Residential Energy

1. Set up a state building company to embark on a major retrofit of our housing stock.
2. Give up-front state grants of €30,000 on average to cover the cost of retrofitting private homes to be paid back from lower energy bills.
3. Target houses with poor BER ratings, those in fuel poverty and those in Local Authority Housing for a deep retrofit.



# Preface

Bríd Smith TD, Richard Boyd Barrett TD and Gino Kenny TD,  
People Before Profit

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Climate change is the defining crisis of our times. Last October, the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) made it clear that without major changes in how we use our land, meet our economic needs, power our homes and transport our families, life for hundreds of millions of people will quickly become unsustainable.

The profits of big business are the main drivers of this crisis, with 20 oil and gas conglomerates responsible for 35% of all greenhouse gas emissions and the top 100 corporations responsible for 71%. These companies publicly profess their support for keeping global temperatures below a 2-degree increase – agreed through the Paris Climate Agreement – but they are gearing up for a world that will be between four and six degrees warmer. In October 2019, Mark Carney, the governor of the Bank of England, admitted that major banking corporations are financing an expansion of oil and gas infrastructure that will lead to temperature increases that would be simply catastrophic.

This is on top of evidence from the influential think tank Carbon Tracker that the biggest oil and gas companies will lose more than two trillion dollars if the world heeds the warnings of the scientific community and limits emissions in line with the IPCC report.



Did you know 71%  
of all greenhouse  
gas emissions come  
from just 100 global  
corporations?

To stop this from happening, big business continues to extract oil and gas at an increasing rate whilst spending hundreds of millions lobbying politicians to keep 'business as usual'. These people are literally willing to scorch the planet in pursuit of profits and the Irish government is with them all the way.

Having banned fracking under pressure from the left, Fine Gael have now placed a major fracked gas processing project – Shannon LNG – on the European Union's priority energy list. If it goes ahead, Shannon LNG will provide a ready market for fracked gas from the US despite the damage to people and the environment that the government accepted when banning it in Ireland. Fine Gael have also blocked People Before Profit's Bill to leave remaining fossil fuels in the ground, in a move that exposes their utter hypocrisy around climate justice. Big business, and their political backers in Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil, will never take the action required to tackle runaway climate change.

Instead, we need to put our faith in trade unions, young people and progressives who are taking to the streets in ever greater numbers to demand climate action to protect their lives and their futures.

People Before Profit is very proud to be part of this growing movement for climate justice and we offer this manifesto for radical climate action as a small contribution in the fight against a bankrupt elite hell bent on pursuing profits regardless of the consequences for the rest of humanity.





# Introduction

Our planet is in danger from major climate damage that has already begun. If we do not act immediately, we will face extreme weather, flooding and intolerable heat in the very near future.

Carbon-fuelled capitalism is now the biggest threat facing humanity. The planet's natural resources have been steadily depleted as corporations cut down rain forests, undermine bio-diversity and overheat the planet by releasing dangerous greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

According to the International Panel on Climate Change, we have just over a decade to cut Co2 emissions by 45% or face a dangerous tipping point that could make large sections of the earth uninhabitable.<sup>1</sup> We are all vulnerable if these targets are not met, but we are not all equally responsible.


The Carbon Majors Report in 2017 showed that 71% of all greenhouse gas emissions can be linked to just 100 transnational corporations.<sup>2</sup> A second report from the Climate Accountability Institute found that just 20 oil and gas corporations are responsible for 35% of all greenhouse gas emissions in the modern era.<sup>3</sup>

These corporations have understood the effects of climate change for at least 30 years, but their addiction to profit has meant that they have increased production and emissions regardless of the consequences.<sup>4</sup>

Ireland mirrors these trends in global capitalism as rapid growth has enriched the few at the expense of the many and increased greenhouse gas pollution in the process. Ireland is a particular laggard when it comes to emissions, producing 50% more per capita than other Europeans and three times as much as those in developing countries.<sup>5</sup>

The government indulges in a hypocritical rhetoric about climate change but its actions tell another story.





Our twin objectives are to  
reduce emissions and create  
a Just Transition for farmers,  
workers and ordinary families.

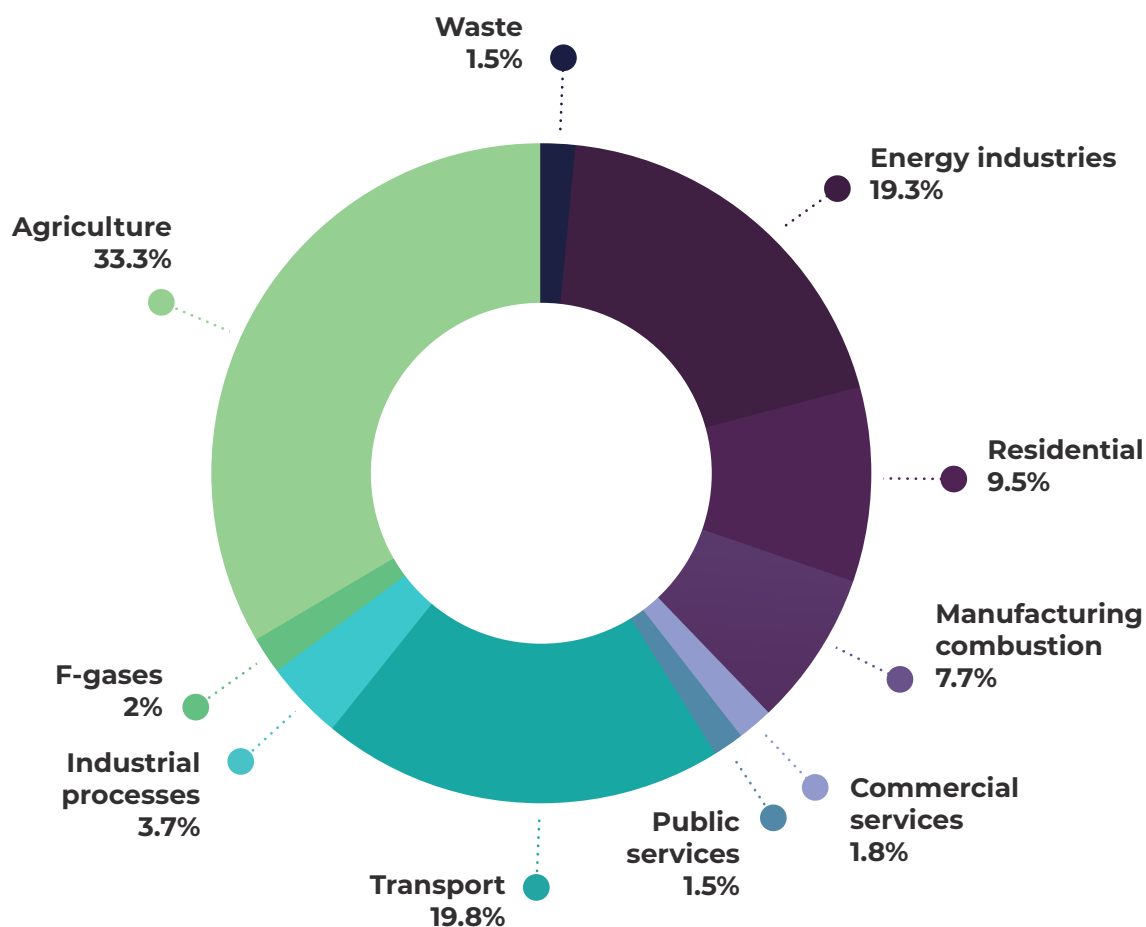
Despite producing a Climate Action Plan in 2019, Fine Gael are:

- Proceeding with an extra runway at Dublin Airport;
- Continuing to pursue international data centres that consume vast quantities of electricity;
- Continuing to subsidise peat production with high Co2 emissions;
- Supporting the construction of Liquefied Natural Gas Terminals at Shannon and Cork that will house massive quantities of fracked North American gas;
- Continuing to issue exploration licences to oil and gas companies;
- Blocking People Before Profit's Bill to keep fossil fuels in the ground;
- Continuing to increase the beef and dairy herds in line with Harvest 2025.

Against this blatant hypocrisy and inaction, this manifesto proposes real actions so that Ireland lives up to its responsibilities. But we also want to make sure that working people are supported in any transitional process and given the proper state supports to reduce Co2 emissions without damaging their standard of living.

In order to reach the twin objectives of emissions reduction and a Just Transition, we need to understand where the greenhouse gases which damage our planet are coming from in this country. We can then make specific proposals for change.

# Greenhouse gas emissions by sector, 2017



From the above chart, we can see that 82% of greenhouse gas emissions come from four key areas as follows:



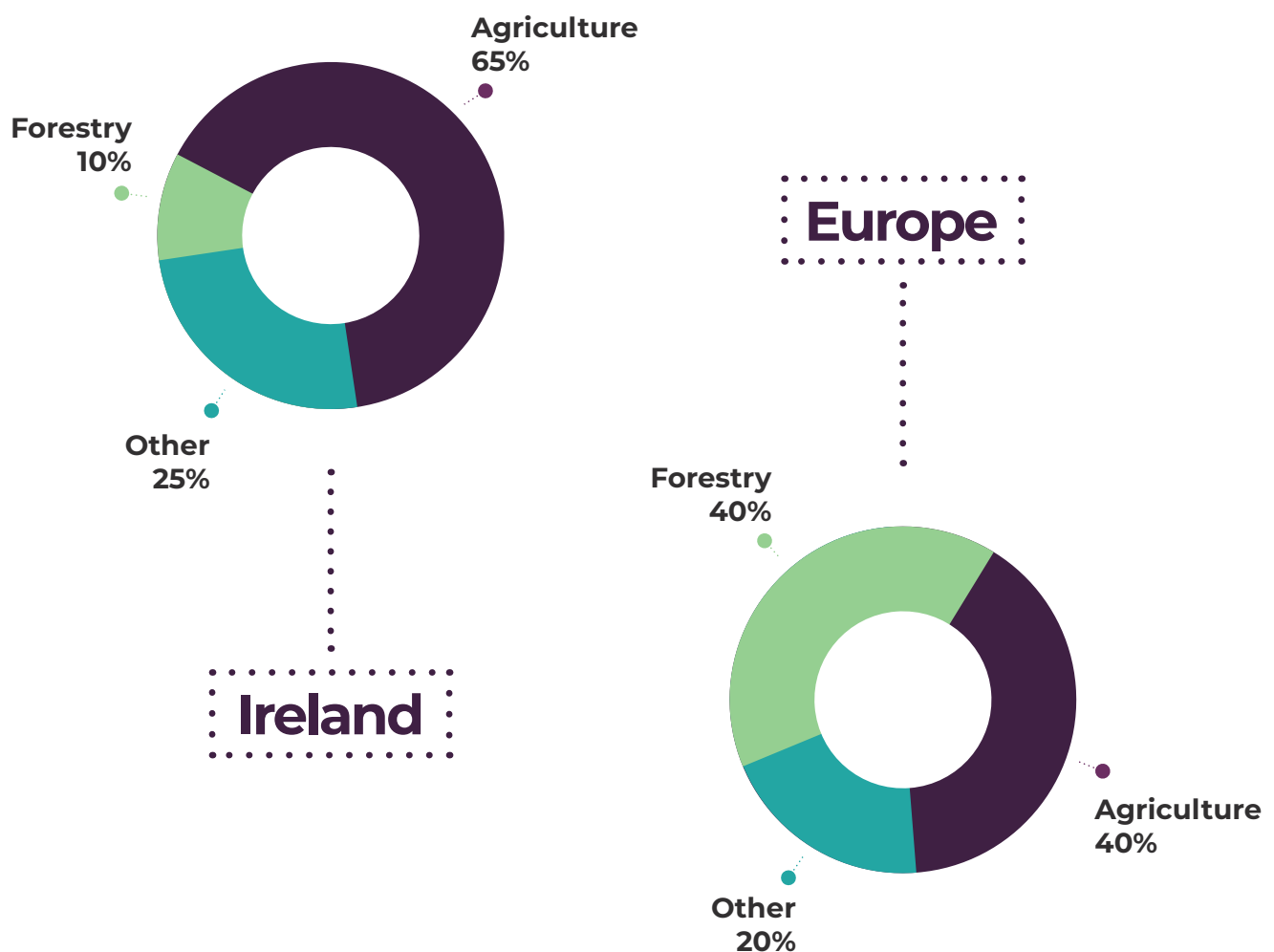
The rest of this manifesto spells out what specific action can be taken in each sector. We understand full well that our proposals will be deemed 'impractical' by those who support the current capitalist system. But this system is rapidly becoming impractical for humanity itself. Doing what the science demands means eco-socialist policies which place the interests of people and planet before the greed for profit of the major corporations.

# Agriculture

The Irish agricultural system will have to change dramatically over the next decade to reduce emissions and increase equality and sustainability. The Teagasc Annual Farm Survey shows that just 36% of 135,000 Irish farms are currently considered viable – mostly concentrated in the dairy industry. In all other sectors, Common Agricultural Policy payments are key to on-farm survival, with many farmers forced to work off the farm to supplement their incomes.<sup>6</sup>

A recent report by the Think-Tank for Action on Social Change showed that, when time spent working is factored in, agriculture is now the most unequal sector in the country, with the top 10% of farmers receiving 30% of all income.<sup>7</sup>

The other major challenge in agriculture is emissions. Farming contributes 33% of Irish emissions versus just 10% on the continent. The difference is due to higher levels of intensive production, a culture of beef and dairy farming and a low level of forestry cover. Ireland currently uses 65% of its land for grazing and 10% for forestry, for example, whereas the split in Europe is around 40% agricultural land and 40% forest cover.<sup>8</sup>



In order to make agriculture more economically and environmentally sustainable, we propose breaking the monopoly control of the big agri-corporations and incentivising small and medium-sized farmers to diversify the sector through horticulture, organic products, bee-keeping, widening hedgerows, hemp, agro-forestry, forestry, wetlands and any other forms of agriculture capable of absorbing carbon.

**Our proposed anti-pollution fund from the profits of big agri-businesses would incentivise farmers to give part of their land to environmental initiatives for the benefit of wider society.**

Big agri-companies are committed to increasing beef and dairy production, regardless of the environmental impacts, but small and medium farmers are in a very different category. Their aim is to secure a livelihood for their families in a way that maintains their link to the land and sustains their lives in rural Ireland.

By creating an anti-pollution fund from the profits of big agri-businesses, we can incentivise farmers to offer part of their land to environmental initiatives that will benefit the wider society.

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine estimate that it will cost €567 million annually to plant 125,000 hectares of trees – made up of a mixture of broad leaf, native species and Sitka Spruce.<sup>9</sup>

If farmers take up this scheme over 10 years, it will leave 70% of their land still available for other forms of agriculture that will be further incentivised to move away from beef and dairy.

## **State-sponsored emissions**

Any idea that Fine Gael take climate initiatives seriously has been undermined by the Central Statistics Office, which has shown that from 2012 to 2016, the state gave annual subsidies of €2.5 billion in fossil fuel supports and €1.5 billion in agricultural supports to industries and initiatives that incentivise behaviour that damages the environment.<sup>10</sup>

Each year, Fine Gael support a €500 million subsidy for cheap diesel for the agricultural sector even as they impose carbon taxes on the rest of us. Our alternative is to support farmers who reduce emissions through a major Just Transition Fund and a carbon tax on the major polluting industries.



# The following are our key policy proposals for agriculture:

## 1. Break up the major beef processors and agri-corporations

According to the Central Statistics Office, profit in the agricultural sector was €2,849 million in 2018, but we know that major agri-businesses are using accountancy tricks to avoid paying taxes.<sup>11</sup> Larry Goodman recently used companies in Luxembourg to avoid taxes on €170 million profits, for example, and this process is widespread in other sectors too.<sup>12</sup>

**People Before Profit would nationalise the major agri-corporations** in order to:

- Remove the key vested interests who profit from increased production and pollution;
- Provide funds for a Just Transition for those farmers willing to move to more environmentally sustainable agricultural practices, and;
- Allow the tens of thousands of small and medium farmers to have a more sustainable future by removing the profit motive that is squeezing their livelihoods.

## 2. Initiate a major afforestation and rewilding campaign

Ireland has approximately 1,500,000 hectares of land suitable for sustainable forestry and perhaps a further 500,000 hectares of wet areas appropriate for the regeneration of native woodland.

**Over the next 10 years, People Before Profit would move Ireland towards the European average level of forestry cover (35%) by planting 125,000 hectares of trees and other carbon-absorbing plants annually.**

Some of this land can be delivered through the national forestry agency, Coillte, but the majority will have to be given over by farmers for a guaranteed environment payment every year.

People Before Profit would offer farmers €3,000 annually for every hectare put under an absorption model (hemp, forest, hedgerows etc.). This would cost €560 million (including capital outlay) annually or just over 20% of the profits in the sector at present. Every hectare put under Co2-absorbing farming practices has the potential to both sequester carbon and reduce the cattle and dairy herd. Our estimate is that each hectare moved from livestock to forestry or other forms of sustainable farming will reduce emissions by seven tonnes per hectare per annum.<sup>13</sup>

### 3. Cap the Basic Payment Scheme and increase the Greening Payment

Post 2020, the EU will begin to impose stricter limits on the amount a single farmer can receive in a BPS payment.

The cap should be set at €50,000 per annum with the rest of the money going to increase payments to at least €10,000 per annum for every farmer. All extra money should then be put into the Greening Payment for farmers who plant trees or move to other forms of sustainable farming under the afforestation scheme.

People Before Profit would lobby in Europe to make this a reality.

### 4. Reduce the national dairy herd by 50%

The expansion of the dairy herd to take advantage of the relaxation of milk quotas in 2015 is causing massive damage to the environment. 1.4 million dairy cows emit nearly 150% of the Co2 emitted by the country's 2.7 million cars.

We must reduce the dairy herd considerably, not look to keep increasing it. Farmers who lose money in this reduction will be properly compensated provided they are not earning more than €100,000 per annum when the reduction is made.

## Summary of our key initiatives in agriculture

Total emissions in Ireland 2019	60 million tonnes
Total emissions in agriculture 2019	20 million tonnes
Estimated reduction in emissions per annum by 2030	13 million tonnes
Percentage decrease in the sector over 10 years	65%
Estimated cost per annum	€600 million

# Transport



Urban sprawl and the lack of genuinely extensive public transport have led to a massive dependence on private cars and private goods vehicles.

Figures compiled by the Department of Transport show that the number of licenced vehicles in the state has trebled over the last 30 years due to population increases and a neoliberal model of economic growth.<sup>14</sup>

Instead of this neoliberal approach with its attendant transport emissions, People Before Profit favour a major increase in public transport spending to make the service free for users immediately.

YEAR	NO OF CARS IN THE STATE	% CHANGE
1987	922,484	-----
2017	2,680,000	288

## Making public transport free

Luxembourg is the first European country to announce free public transport, but there are also 50 European cities and towns offering free public transport at least part of the time. Instead of putting its faith in regressive taxes and expensive electric cars, free public transport would be a major signal that the government was serious about climate change and was willing to subsidise it for its citizens.

In our latest Alternative Budget, People Before Profit showed how it is possible to triple investment in public transport and subsidise journeys to make the service free for all end users immediately. The benefits from this will be felt in four key areas.

## 1. Lowering greenhouse gas emissions

Bus journeys currently account for 5.5% of all journeys in the state, but they account for 16% of all passenger km despite being only 0.3% of all vehicle km. This makes public transport potentially 45 times more efficient than private motor transport when it comes to greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>15</sup>

PUBLIC ROAD TRANSPORT	NUMBER MILLIONS	% OF TOTAL
Land vehicle kilometres	185.2 (KM)	0.3
Journeys	252	5.5
Land passenger kilometres	16,600 (Equivalent KM)	16

## 2. Lowering the cost to working people

The Department of Transport estimate that it costs €1,656 a year to run a private car and €644 for other forms of transport.<sup>16</sup> This equates to 13% of all household income. With a major improvement in public transport, this cost would fall, and as it does, the marginal benefit to lower and middle-income earners would be higher as they spend proportionately more on fuel and public transport.

## 3. Reducing the cost of congestion

Research by the Economic and Financial Evaluation Unit of the Department of Transport found that congestion costs in the Greater Dublin area were €308 million in 2012 and are forecast to rise to €2.08 billion by 2033.<sup>17</sup> This is a direct cost that can be mitigated through a major increase in public transport. There are also indirect costs in terms of human wellbeing as people spend less time in traffic.

## 4. Improving air quality

The Environmental Protection Agency states that, each year, 1,510 deaths are caused by poor air quality.<sup>18</sup> This is more than 10 times the amount killed on Irish roads through traffic accidents. Levels of nitrogen dioxide are possibly exceeding EU limits in parts of Dublin according to a recent report by the EPA. Reducing traffic congestion will improve air quality and give a dividend to people who choose to walk and cycle to work.

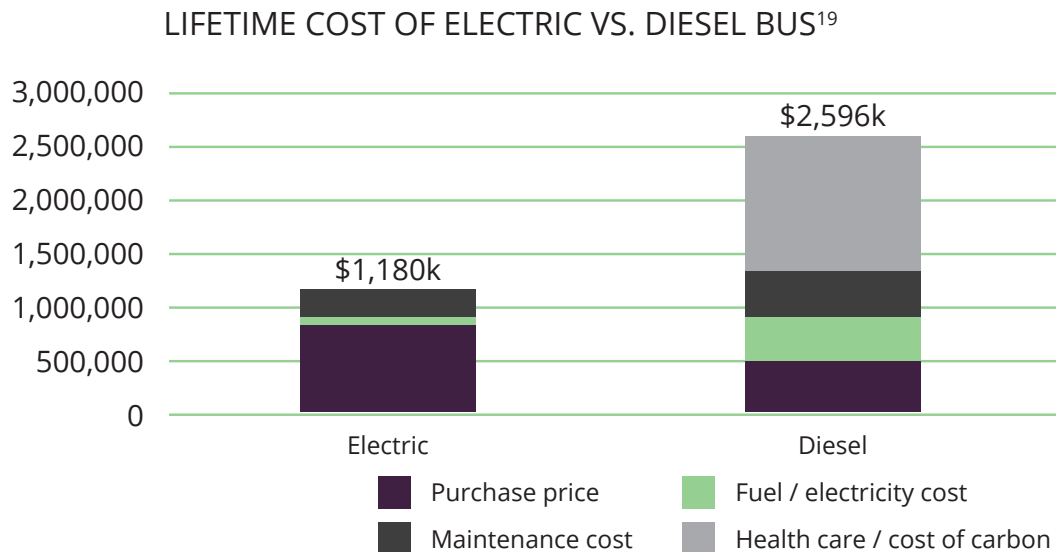
Poor air quality kills 10 times as many Irish people as road deaths annually. Free public transport would help to improve air quality in built-up areas and save lives in the process.



# Here are our key transport proposals:

## 1. Invest in public transport

People Before Profit would add 500 new electric buses to the fleet annually until 2030. This would cost an estimated €350 million annually, but when lower running costs are factored in, these buses are cheaper than their diesel rivals.



## 2. Invest in the rail network

Rail is an extremely efficient mode of transport in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, but historic investment in the road network has meant a shift away from rail to road. People Before Profit would look to reverse this tendency through a carrot-and-stick approach on the freight industry. On the one hand, we would invest in and subsidise the use of the rail network, including finishing the Western Rail Corridor and electrifying the network. On the other hand, we would begin to impose environmental surcharges on companies that continue to use the road network. Our aim would be to move quickly to the European average in terms of freight carried on the rail network and then move to triple this over time so that 15% of all freight was carried on the rail network. This will need capital investment to improve connectivity, as outlined in our Alternative Budget.

## 3. Implement an aviation pollution tax

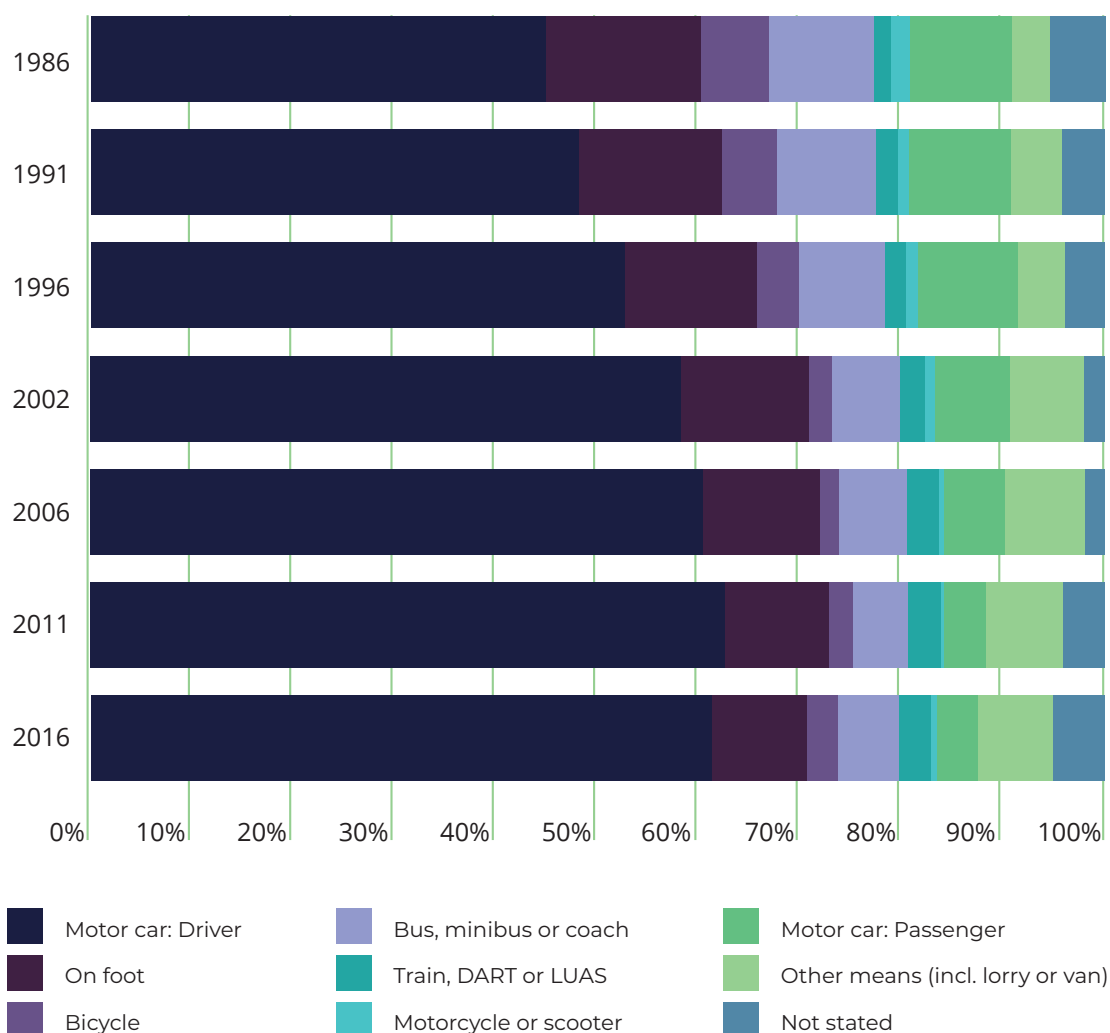
Ryanair made profits of €1.45 billion in 2018, whilst for Aer Lingus it was €305 million. Meanwhile, the massive quantities of commercial fuel they use is exempted from taxes despite the damage being done to the

environment.<sup>20</sup> To internalise costs currently being imposed on the rest of society, People Before Profit would impose a tax of 33 cent per litre on airline fuel and pass legislation to ban companies from passing this on in higher flight costs. We would also increase the cost of business air travel by imposing a charge of 20% on flight tickets for anyone flying more than four times a year.

## 4. Invest in cycling infrastructure

Around 16% of all journeys in the state are either cycling or walking, but this has fallen considerably since the 1980s as car use has increased. We propose spending a one-off payment of €165 million to create major cycling lanes right across the country.

## Means of travel of working commuters, 1986–2016





### A carbon tax on aviation

Ryanair is now Europe’s 10<sup>th</sup> biggest corporate polluter and the worst airline on the continent when measured by emissions. Ryanair created 9.9 million tonnes of Co2 in 2018, the same amount as all road transport in the Republic of Ireland.<sup>21</sup> One of the reasons for this is that Ryanair does not face a tax on commercial air fuels, such as exist in the US, Canada, Japan and Australia.

The European Commission funded a study on aviation taxation, which was completed in mid-2018 but never published. This showed that Europe is chronically under-taxing the sector and that a tax on commercial air-fuel would reduce emissions by around 11% (24 million tonnes) without having much impact on jobs.<sup>22</sup> At present, the cost of the pollution via the European Trading System is about €800 million annually. But this is a fraction of the €27 billion which the EU estimate would be collected if levied on all kerosene lifted in the European Union at a rate of €0.33/litre.<sup>23</sup>

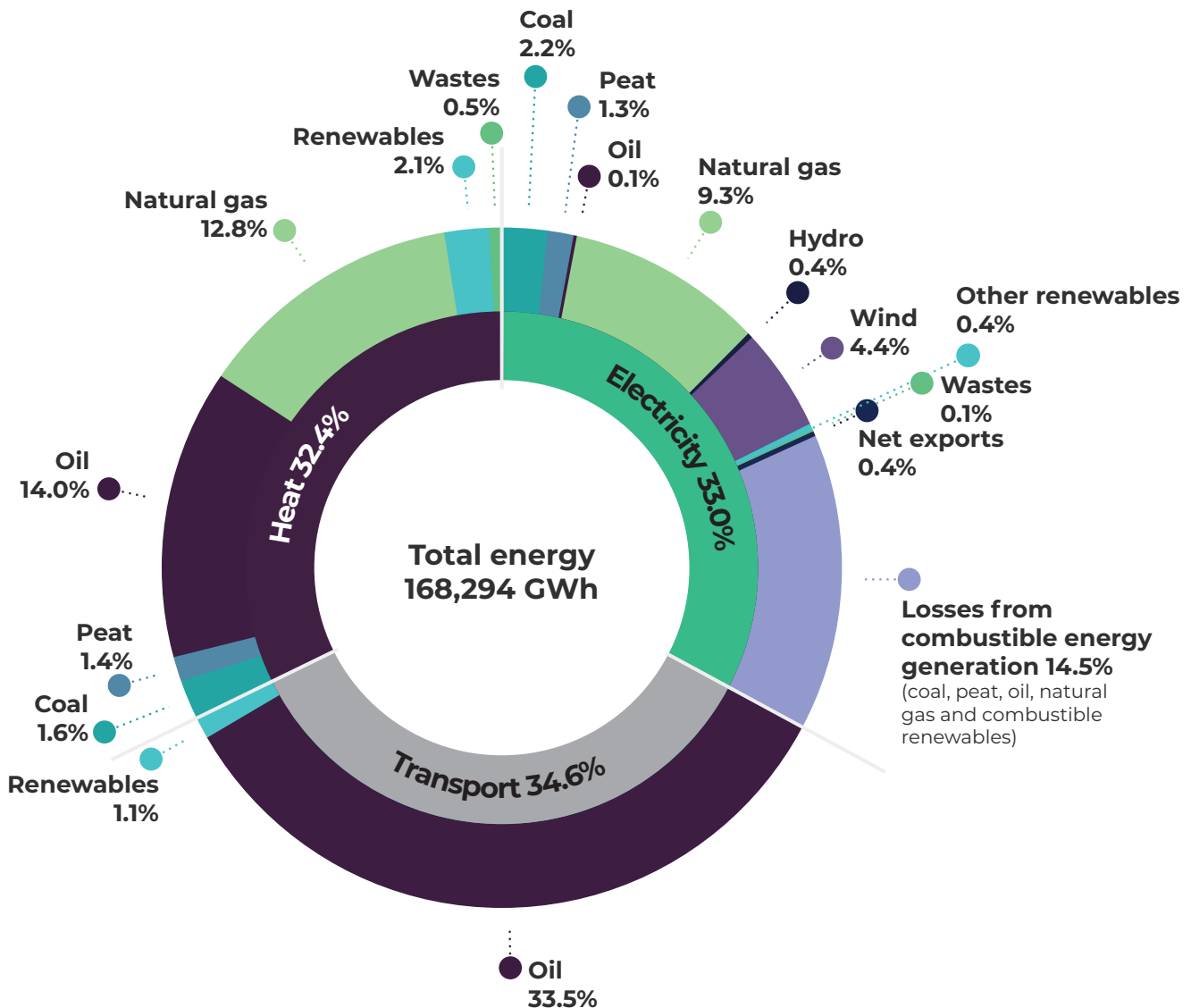
Irish airports account for roughly 3.5% of all passenger journeys and flights in the EU.<sup>24</sup> If we levied the tax in Irish airspace, this would take in in the region of €900 million per annum. This should be accompanied by legal action to prevent companies passing on the increase to their customers.<sup>25</sup>

## Summary of our key initiatives in transport

Total emissions transport sector	12 million tonnes
Estimated reduction in emissions per annum by 2030	5 million tonnes
Estimated reduction in emissions	42%
Estimated cost per annum	1,500 million

# Energy Generation

Energy generation refers to the process of turning fossil fuels and renewable energy into electricity. This is both a complex process and a wasteful one, as just 60% of the total inputs are transformed into electricity – the rest being lost in the form of heat. This information is captured in the graphic below.<sup>26</sup>



With such a wasteful process, the types of inputs being used to generate electricity become extremely important. Despite this, a third of Irish electricity comes from two of the dirtiest fossil fuels on the market – coal and peat. Because of their carbon structure, these fuels generate 40% more greenhouse gases than oil and 96% more than natural gas.



The first step in reducing emissions in this industry is to move away from coal and peat immediately before moving away from gas over the next decade. This year, the Irish government will give a €100-million grant to peat-fuelled electricity production, despite the damage being caused to the environment.<sup>27</sup> In direct contrast to this, People Before Profit would close peat-fuelled power stations as quickly as possible and retrain all staff to work on the bogs with their current level of salary. As a natural habitat, peat bogs can act as carbon sinks if they are managed correctly.

**Did you know, if we closed Moneypoint immediately instead of in five years, we would reduce Ireland's carbon footprint by 30 million tonnes or 50% of the country's emissions for an entire year?**

Organising a Just Transition in this way is, therefore, essential so that working people are not being asked to carry the burden for reducing our national emissions. We would also close the country's major coal-burning power station at Moneypoint. In 2018, Moneypoint was out of action for over two months, so there is a precedent for coping without it via the wholesale market. People Before Profit would therefore close Moneypoint immediately, instead of the scheduled 2025 – saving 30 million tonnes of Co2 from being pumped into the atmosphere or 50% of the country's current yearly total.<sup>28</sup> Again, we would support the workers in this plant to retrain on full salary and move into the station's renewable energy division. Once this is done, we would move rapidly to replace natural gas with wind energy, getting at least 90% of all electricity from this source by 2030.

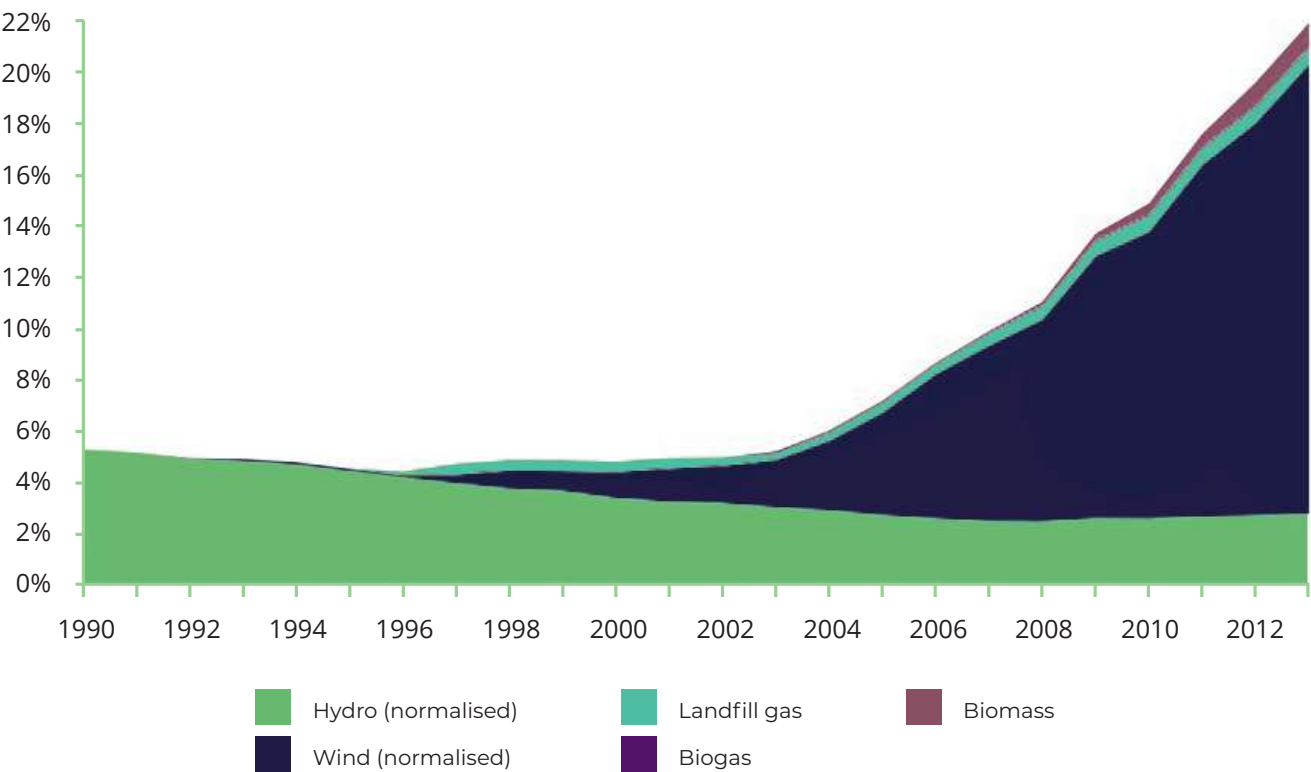
### **No to carbon taxes: make the corporations pay**

In Budget 2020, Fine Gael introduced a carbon tax of €6 a tonne to be paid by motorists and people heating their homes. This is a regressive tax that will hit low-income, middle-income and rural people hardest. It is also very unlikely to change behaviour as the government have not initiated either a national retrofit programme or free public transport. In addition to destroying good will with people who see the climate being used for extra taxes, this measure creates a dangerous illusion that Fine Gael are taking the climate issue seriously when we know they are not. Remember that 60% of a litre of petrol already goes to the government in taxes without changing behaviour at a macro level.

Instead of this regressive and ineffective measure, People Before Profit favour a twin approach to reducing emissions. On the one hand, we would support people by rolling out a national retrofitting scheme and free public transport. On the other hand, we would take €900 million from the aviation sector this year and look to increase this every year to 2030.

# Moving into wind

Last year, Ireland managed to generate 27% of its electricity from wind sources. This has allowed the state to reduce emissions by 3.6 million tonnes – enough to power more than a million road vehicles.<sup>29</sup> The graph below gives a visual representation of this transformation.



This success has prompted the government to promise that, by 2030, 70% of our electricity will come from this source.<sup>30</sup> But Fine Gael also want to increase final demand for electricity usage by 50% over the next decade in order to allow major corporations to set up data centres in Ireland. These create little employment but are expected to demand a third of our electricity by 2030.

If we drop the aspiration to hand 31% of our electricity to private data centres, we could provide most of the country’s energy supply from renewable sources simply by adopting the government’s current investment projections. The relevant figures are represented in the following table.<sup>31</sup>

YEAR	CAPACITY GIGAWATT HRS	% OF ENERGY FROM WIND	TOTAL COST (BN €)
2017	3.5	27	3.3 – 4.55
2030	11.7	90 – 95	24.31

This increase in capacity would be the centre point of People Before Profit's energy policy as part of a Smart Energy System that makes intermittent sources of power far more reliable.

It is vital that the state undertakes the bulk of any new investment, moreover, as private companies have consistently alienated local communities through poor consultation and very few monetary incentives. If people are going to accept renewable infrastructure in their locality, they must be at the centre of the planning process and benefit directly from much cheaper energy costs. Alongside this extra state investment, we would open up the grid to micro-generators who can further increase capacity in the system and help to democratise energy generation.

The initial cost is around €2.5 billion per annum, but these costs have already fallen by roughly 70% since the 1980s, making it 20% cheaper to produce electricity from renewable sources than from non-renewables today.<sup>32</sup>

## Here are our key policy proposals for energy:

1. People Before Profit would close all coal and peat-fired power stations immediately. To make sure front-line workers are protected, we would retrain staff and employ them in renewable energy initiatives.
2. Over the next 10 years, we would invest €25–€30 billion to build wind capacity to power 90% of our electricity needs, assuming steady levels of demand.

## Summary of our key initiatives in energy

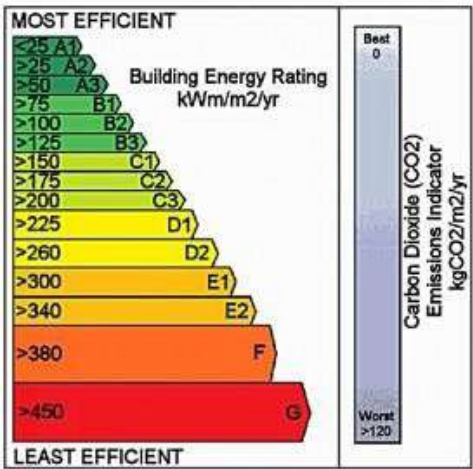
Total emissions energy sector	12 million tonnes
Estimated reduction in emissions per annum by 2030	10 million tonnes
Estimated percentage reductions	83%
Estimated cost per annum	€2,500 million

# Residential Sector



Irish houses use an average of 7% more energy than their European counterparts, but they emit 58% more greenhouse gas emissions in a measure of just how inefficient the housing stock currently is.<sup>33</sup>

There are also wide variations based on the levels of household insulation – itself largely dependent on the age of the property. As the graph to the right shows, houses with an A Building Energy Rating (BER) are between 10 and 25 times more efficient than houses with a G rating.<sup>34</sup> As the accompanying table also reveals, however, only 14% of the Irish housing stock is currently of an A or B rated standard.



BER RATINGS	% OF BER STOCK	% OF HOUSING STOCK
A	4	2
B	10	11
C	37	38
D	24	24
E	12	12
F&G	13	13



# Retrofitting housing stock

The low level of energy efficiency of the Irish housing stock is by far the most significant reason for the high levels of emissions. In recognition of this fact, the SEAI offer a number of grants and incentives to help people to upgrade their houses.

The two most significant to date have been the Better Energy Home Scheme and the Free Energy Upgrades Scheme, with 390,000 houses availing of support. However, less than 1,000 of these have been given the deep retrofit that will be necessary to reduce emissions in line with the EU Near Zero Build Policy – directive (2010/31/10).<sup>35</sup>

Instead of an emphasis on the private sector, People Before Profit would establish a state building company tasked with training workers, rolling out the service and scaling the number of houses being completed annually.

An estimate of 50,000 units is a reasonable starting point, but as the decade advances, there is no reason why the state would not be in a position to retrofit 100,000 houses plus every year.

On the consumer side, we would establish interest-free loans of, on average €30,000, for householders who would pay back 80% to the state from their ongoing energy savings. Once the state is re-paid, the householder will have cheaper bills and a better insulated property for life.



## A state building company

People Before Profit would establish a state building company to achieve economies of scale and offer households interest-free loans paid for from the savings achieved via the retrofitting process. Writing in the *Irish Times*, the Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, stated that ‘the cost of retrofitting and insulating all our homes in Ireland is about €50 billion. No government of any colour or any party would be able to find that kind of money, even over 10 years’.<sup>36</sup> Yet, in the last 10 years, various Irish governments have handed €60 billion to wealthy bondholders in interest payments, with no social dividend.

Retrofitting the housing stock would reduce emissions, reduce daily energy costs, improve air quality and provide much needed employment. For all of these reasons, we are committed to finding the money to deliver a major retrofit programme of 50,000 units in the first two years, with a gradual increase to 100,000 units by 2030. This would cost between €1.5 billion and €2.5 billion annually, but the direct and indirect savings are more than sufficient to make the investment, as the figures below reveal.<sup>37</sup>

	DWELLING TYPE			
	DETACHED	SEMI-DETACHED	APARTMENTS – TERRACED HOUSES	TOTALS
Total no of retrofits	22,000	14,000	14,000	50,000
Cost savings per unit (€)	6,000	3,000	2,300	–
Total cost savings (€)	132 million	42 million	32 million	206 million
Individual reduction in Co2 emissions (tonnes of oil eq)	17	8	6.5	–
Total reduction in Co2 emissions (tonnes of oil eq)	374,000	112,000	91,000	577,000

If we assume the cost to the state in year one is €2.5 billion, owing to the higher levels of work to be completed, the total return to society is 8.25% on investment, even when we focus only on purely monetary considerations. In addition, the saving of 577,000 tonnes of Co2 represents a 10% reduction on total (non-electricity) residential emissions in year one alone. This reduction will taper as better insulated houses are retrofitted, but the cumulative total would be far in excess of the 45% reduction required over 10 years.

## Here are our key policy proposals for the residential sector:

- 1.** Set up a state building company to achieve economies of scale.
- 2.** Upgrade 1.5 million houses over the next 20 years, initially prioritising a combination of the 220,000 houses that currently have an F or G rating and the 400,000 homes that are currently facing fuel poverty.
- 3.** The scheme would be fully funded for the 140,000 local authority houses and would provide 100% up-front costs for everyone else. For those in private houses, the government would look to recoup 80% of the up-front costs paid for through lower energy costs over time until the grant was repaid.

## Summary of emissions reductions (residential)

Total emissions residential sector	6 million tonnes
Estimated reduction in emissions per annum by 2030	4 million tonnes
Estimated reduction in emissions	66%
Estimated cost per annum	€2,500 million

## How would we pay for this?

In our Alternative Budget 2020, People Before Profit showed how it is possible to raise an extra €20 billion in revenue annually through a combination of:

- Closing corporation tax loopholes;
- Increasing taxes on those earning more than €100,000;
- Initiating a wealth tax of 2% on any household with more than €3.4 million in assets (less €1 million for a family home);
- Targeted measures on bank profits, the profits of IFSC firms and the pharmaceutical industry;
- Targeted measures on the major polluting corporations in agriculture, aviation and energy generation.

This allowed us to allocate €6 billion to a number of the climate initiatives laid out in this document, leaving a balance of €1.1 billion. This would be raised by redirecting the €4 billion in current annual subsidies to polluting industries away from them and into a climate fund.

In this process, we are keenly aware of the need for a Just Transition, so we would also ring-fence the remaining €2.9 billion to make sure low and middle-income workers and farmers continue to benefit from subsidies that are not linked to carbon emissions.

## Final summary

Ireland's total emissions (2019)	60 million (tonnes per annum)
Emissions covered in this manifesto	50 million (tonnes per annum)
% total emissions covered in this manifesto	83
Estimated reduction in emissions	32 million (tonnes per annum)
Estimated reduction in the areas covered	64%
Estimated reduction overall	53%
Estimated cost per annum	€7,100 million

# A proud record on climate action

This document lays out a number of crucial initiatives that must be taken immediately, but it is important to note that, since its formation, People Before Profit also has a proud record on climate action and climate justice. Below, we lay out some of the initiatives we have been involved in.

## 1. **Climate Emergency Measures Bill**

In 2018, People Before Profit wrote the 'Keep It in the Ground' Climate Emergency Measures Bill aimed at making Ireland the fifth country in the world to ban oil and gas exploration in its territories. We will do everything in our power to get this Bill into law in the coming months.

## 2. **The fight against fracking in Ireland**

In 2017, People Before Profit were the first political party to bring a Bill to Dáil Éireann advocating a total ban on all on-shore and off-shore fracking. We are proud to be part of the struggle against Shannon LNG, which would import fracked gas to Ireland. Finally, we stood squarely with the people of Rosport in the battle against Shell.

## 3. **Blocking oil exploration in Dublin Bay**

Working alongside Save Our Sea Front and Coastal Concern, People Before Profit launched a campaign in 2012 to stop an oil rig owned by Providence resources being erected in Dublin Bay. This was successful.

## 4. **Save Our Sea Front**

In 2002, People Before Profit helped to establish the Save Our Sea Front Campaign in Dún Laoghaire. This campaign has fought successfully against the commercialisation of the sea front for nearly 20 years.

## 5. **Protecting our forests**

In 2013, People Before Profit teamed up with the Woodland League and the Natural Resources Protection Alliance to organise a protest of 5,000 people in Avondale National Forest. This stopped the sale of valuable forestry land.

## 6. **Defending public transport**

People Before Profit have consistently argued for extra funding for public transport in our pre-budget submissions and in Dáil Éireann. We also stood with Dublin Bus Workers, Bus Éireann workers and staff from Iarnród Éireann when they each took strike action to defend their jobs and the public service.

## 7. **Fighting for water**

People Before Profit were proud to fight against water charges, but we have also argued repeatedly for investment in the infrastructure, including budgeting for €400 million extra investment in our annual alternative budgets.





# Conclusion

The fight against climate change is both the greatest threat currently facing humanity and our clearest signal that capitalism is at the root of our problems.

For decades, mainstream politicians and the owners of corporations have understood the dangers of greenhouse gas emissions, but their addiction to profit has meant that they have continued to pollute the planet, regardless of the consequences.

The Irish elites have likewise been laggards in the fight against climate change, putting economic growth for a tiny minority ahead of all other calculations.

This manifesto aims to end this sorry record through a series of policy proposals that would slow down the damage caused by greenhouse gas emissions without burdening working people.

In the key areas of transport, energy generation and residential energy use, we put forward ideas that will surpass the targets set by the International Panel on Climate Change whilst actually making life better for the majority of people





through cheaper utility bills and transport costs. We also offer a pathway for small and medium-sized farmers who are rightly concerned about the decline of rural Ireland.

These measures still don't go far enough, but they are the start of a just and eco-socialist transition that uses state resources to support people in reducing their emissions, rather than taxing them relentlessly.

Globally, the climate movement will have to challenge the logic of profit if it is to be successful, and yet there are things that can, and must, be done to reduce emissions and slow down the damage immediately.

People Before Profit have been in the front line of the fight for climate justice since it was founded in the early part of the century, and we aim to continue this proud record over the coming weeks, months and years.





# Afterword

Paul Murphy TD, RISE

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Avoiding climate catastrophe is the political challenge of our time. If we fail to achieve a radical reduction in carbon emissions and put society on a rapid transition to zero net carbon emissions within the next 10 years, the consequences will be devastating. Extreme weather events will become more and more regular. Key crops will be threatened within the next two decades. By 2070, half a billion people will live in areas that experience heat waves so hot and humid that they will kill healthy people in the shade within six hours.

In addition, a radical transformation must take place in how we produce food and acquire the raw materials necessary to ensure good living standards for all. Under current agricultural practices, our soils are exhausted and depleted of nutrients.

We face a biodiversity crisis and are heading towards a mass extinction, with one million species threatened. The science is clear on this, too. We depend on a rich array of plants and animals to produce healthy food and to live healthy lives. We are connected in thousands of ways in a complex food web that, if disrupted, could severely impact society.

The problem we face in achieving the change that we need is not primarily a technical or scientific challenge. It is a political one. Fundamentally it is the fact that fossil fuel corporations are sitting on trillions of euro worth of carbon that simply cannot be burnt if we are to avoid climate catastrophe. These fossil fuel capitalists are at the very centre of political and economic power.

Doing what the science demands means breaking out of the framework of a capitalist system where decisions are made on the basis of the maximisation of profit. That system will lead the entire world into catastrophe. Instead of production for profit, we need democratic planning of our economies. We need production for people and our environment. Only with such a socialist change will it be possible to mobilise the significant resources needed for a rapid and just transition to a net zero-carbon economy.



Recognising that breaking with capitalism and fighting for eco-socialist change is necessary is crucial for the environmental movement. It should not just inform our 'end-goal', but it should affect the tactics and strategies employed today – for example, understanding that a strategy focused on lobbying corporations or establishment politicians will not prove adequate, and understanding the potential power of the working class to disrupt and overturn the current system will prove decisive.

However, while this understanding is necessary, it is not sufficient. Combined with that general understanding and a vision of a socialist society, the socialist left needs to put forward a programme of radical change, which shows how the resources to transition our economies exist and could be mobilised if the logic ruling our society was the interests of people, rather than profit.

This manifesto is an important and serious contribution to that task, and for that Brian O'Boyle and People Before Profit are to be congratulated. We in RISE have chosen to frame the programme that we need in terms of a Green New Deal with socialist policies, taking advantage of the popularity of the sort of programmes put forward by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Naomi Klein, amongst many others. Central to this is the need to connect the struggle against climate catastrophe with the struggle for long-denied social justice. That means our programme must also address the oppression women, LGBTQ+ people, black and brown people, migrants and travellers face.

This is vital because of the forces that we are up against, in the form of the fossil fuel companies. They will wage a fierce and unrelenting battle with all of their resources to resist the policies set out in this manifesto. To do so, they will use propaganda and ideology as well as the brute force of the state seen from Rossport to Standing Rock. The only group in society with the potential power to defeat them and save our planet is the working class. When united, there is nothing that can defeat us.

# Endnotes

- 1 See the International Panel on Climate Change – Summary for Policy Makers: [https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2019/05/SR15\\_SPM\\_version\\_report\\_LR.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2019/05/SR15_SPM_version_report_LR.pdf) for more details.
- 2 See 'Just 100 Companies Responsible for 71% of Global Emissions Study Says': <https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2017/jul/10/100-fossil-fuel-companies-investors-responsible-71-global-emissions-cdp-study-climate-change> for more details.
- 3 See <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/oct/09/revealed-20-firms-third-carbon-emissions> for more details.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 See these articles for context: <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/extremely-concerning-ireland-labelled-a-laggard-over-climate-action-antaisce-1.3534519>; <http://www.irishenvironment.com/reports/ireland-is-still-lagging-on-climate-change/>.
- 6 See <https://www.teagasc.ie/media/website/publications/2017/2016-NFS-Viability-Report.pdf> for more details.
- 7 See [https://www.tasc.ie/download/pdf/18457\\_inequality\\_in\\_irelandinnerv2.pdf](https://www.tasc.ie/download/pdf/18457_inequality_in_irelandinnerv2.pdf) for more details.
- 8 See [https://ec.europa.eu/ireland/news/key-eu-policy-areas/agriculture\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/ireland/news/key-eu-policy-areas/agriculture_en) for more details.
- 9 This information comes from Parliamentary Question 33585/19.
- 10 See [https://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/rp/fossil-fuelandsimilarsubsidies/Fossil\\_Fuel\\_and\\_Similar\\_Subsidies.pdf](https://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/rp/fossil-fuelandsimilarsubsidies/Fossil_Fuel_and_Similar_Subsidies.pdf) for more details.
- 11 See <https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/agriculture/> for more details.
- 12 See <https://www.irishtimes.com/business/agribusiness-and-food/nine-goodman-companies-made-largely-untaxed-profit-of-170m-1.3943367> for more details.
- 13 For the higher end estimation, see <http://www.treesintrust.com/environmental.shtm> and [https://www.sfmcanada.org/images/Publications/EN/CO2\\_Sink\\_EN.pdf](https://www.sfmcanada.org/images/Publications/EN/CO2_Sink_EN.pdf); for the lower end figures see <https://carbonneutral.com.au/faqs/>.
- 14 See <https://assets.gov.ie/10622/fbfed806d0814e29aa40c970a939250f.pdf> for more details on trends in Irish transportation.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 See <http://www.dttas.ie/sites/default/files/publications/corporate/english/cost-congestion-main-report/cost-congestion-main-report.pdf> for more details.
- 18 See <https://www.epa.ie/irelandsenvironment/air/> for more details.
- 19 Source: <https://blogs.ei.columbia.edu/2016/05/31/going-electric-adds-up-to-a-good->



idea-for-nyc-buses/

- 20 See <https://www.euronews.com/2019/05/13/climate-change-aviation-fuel-tax-would-cut-co2-not-hit-jobs-leaked-eu-commission-report-fi> for more details.
- 21 See <https://www.statista.com/chart/17582/megatonnes-of-co2-equivalent-in-the-eu/> for more details.
- 22 See this report for more details: <https://www.transportenvironment.org/publications/leaked-european-commission-study-aviation-taxes>.
- 23 See <https://www.transportenvironment.org/press/eu-sat-data-showing-benefits-ending-airlines%E2%80%99-tax-break-%E2%80%93-leak> for more details.
- 24 For these calculations, we used <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/9428738/7-06122018-AP-EN.pdf/50a52d8d-3f61-4517-ace3-d3f56ed-5cd91> and <http://www.dttas.ie/sites/default/files/publications/corporate/english/transport-trends-2018/transport-trends-2018.pdf>
- 25 As it would be difficult to levy a pollution charge directly on fuel without airline companies passing it on in higher fares, we would levy the tax on the profits of these companies having worked out the amount on the basis of a 33 cent charge per litre of kerosene used.
- 26 Source: <https://www.slideshare.net/SustainableEnergyAut/energy-trends-in-ireland>.
- 27 See [https://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/rp/fossil-fuelandsimilarsubsidies/Fossil\\_Fuel\\_and\\_Similar\\_Subsidies.pdf](https://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/rp/fossil-fuelandsimilarsubsidies/Fossil_Fuel_and_Similar_Subsidies.pdf) for more details
- 28 See <https://greennews.ie/revealed-moneypoint-out-of-action-over-two-months/> for more details.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 See <https://www.dccae.gov.ie/documents/Climate%20Action%20Plan%202019.pdf> for more details.
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 See <https://www.lazard.com/perspective/levelized-cost-of-energy-and-levelized-cost-of-storage-2018/> for more details
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- 34 See <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/dber/domesticbuildingenergyratingsquarter42018/> for more details.
- 35 See [https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/joint\\_committee\\_on\\_housing\\_planning\\_and\\_local\\_government/2019-05-15/3/](https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/joint_committee_on_housing_planning_and_local_government/2019-05-15/3/) for more details.
- 36 See <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/environment/making-all-homes-energy-efficient-to-cost-50bn-says-varadkar-1.3897644> for more details.
- 37 The information for these calculations comes from <https://www.seai.ie/grants/home-energy-grants/deep-retrofit-grant/>.

