



THE GREEN CONNECTION

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30 January 2024

To: NCOP Land Reform, Environment, Mineral Resources and Energy

**Attention: Ms TC Modise, MP, Chairperson of the Select Committee on Land Reform,
Environment, Mineral Resources and Energy**

C/O Mr Bawa

By email: abawa@parliament.gov.za

The Green Connection Submission on the Climate Change Bill

The Green Connection is a registered non-governmental organisation, that believes economic growth and development, improvement of socio-economic status and conservation of natural resources can only take place within a commonly understood framework of sustainable development. It aims to provide practical support to both the government and nongovernmental/ civil society sectors, which are an integral part of sustainable development. The Green Connection is an environmental and social justice civil society organisation that promotes sustainable livelihoods and the achievement of environmental rights.

The Green Connection submits these comments in response to an invitation by the Select Committee for written comments on the Climate Change Bill.

On 27 May 2022, The Green Connection submitted extensive comments on the Climate Change Bill as part of the National Assembly's public participation process. A copy of these comments is attached as annexure "A".

Introduction

According to the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Report](#), human caused climate change is already affecting weather and has resulted in climate extremes in



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every region across the globe. This has led to adverse impacts related to losses and damages to nature and people, leaving vulnerable communities that have contributed the least being more affected. Whilst we face the climate crisis, we need urgent action to phase out fossil fuels and transition to low-carbon economies in that regard The Green Connection welcomes the climate change bill and requires this law to be immediately brought into action to curb the climate crisis.

The Climate Crisis

[The 6th Assessment report \(AR6\)](#) that was released by the international body that assess science related to climate change acknowledged that we need large - scale reductions on greenhouse gas emissions. In it's summary for policy makers it noted that

- It is unequivocal that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean and land, and that widespread and rapid changes in the atmosphere, ocean, cryosphere, and biosphere have occurred.
- Climate change caused by human activities is already impacting weather resulting in extreme weather temperatures.
- The report further noted that global temperatures will continue to rise and that the global warming of 1.5 or 2 degrees will be exceeded unless we reduce our greenhouse gas emissions in the next decade.
- Changes in weather pattern become larger in direct relation to increasing global warming which result in extreme temperatures, agricultural and ecological droughts and melting of glaciers.
- Greenhouse gas emissions consequences are irreversible for centuries to thousands of years particularly changes in ocean, ocean sheets and global sea levels.
- According to science limiting human caused global warming requires limiting the carbon dioxide emissions along with reducing other greenhouse gas emissions. While also reducing methane emissions would limit the warming effect and improve quality of life.

No need for new investments in fossil fuels



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The climate crisis is also acknowledged by [the International Energy Agency report](#) which highlighted that there is no need for new investments in the fossil fuel supply in our NetZero pathway. Our utmost concern is that the Department of Mineral Resources remains committed to accelerated extraction of fossil fuels such as oil and gas which would majorly contribute to greenhouse gas emissions.

[Offshore oil and gas pose a threat to functioning of marine ecosystems and to small-scale fishers that depend on oceans to make a living.](#) Small-scale fishers and fishing-dependent communities are particularly vulnerable to the negative impacts of offshore oil and gas exploration activities which could (among other things) lead to a depletion in the fish stocks upon which the livelihoods of these small-scale fishers and fishing communities depend. Such impacts include marine ecosystem impacts resulting from marine seismic surveys, as well as impacts arising from any catastrophic oil spills that could occur because of an uncontrolled wellhead blowout related to offshore oil and gas exploration and/or production drilling).

Promotion of gas as a transition fuel by government and vested interests raises serious concerns as increased use of gas especially in electricity generation will result in more greenhouse emissions and methane. Methane emissions have greater impact than that of carbon dioxide as they are projected to be [82.5 times as impactful as those](#) of carbon dioxide. The desirability of using gas as a 'transitional' fuel is also questionable having regard to volatile international gas prices, as well as the potential risk of Carbon Border Taxes being introduced in the future.

To address climate change and reduce global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius we need to rapidly reduce greenhouse gas emissions by halting our reliance on fossil fuel. It is important that the Climate Change Act (once promulgated) empowers the Minister responsible for environmental affairs to rapidly take the necessary actions required.

[We have explained in our detailed comments on the Climate Change Bill that we have certain concerns with the bill and we have endorsed the submission of the CER.](#)

We welcome the requirement for notice and comment procedures to be followed before various powers listed in section 29(1) of the Bill are exercised. However, we are concerned that that the provision for notice and comment is not included in respect of some of the empowering provisions, and we are further concerned that the notice



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and comment procedure does not adequately make provision for meaningful consultation with historically disadvantaged and vulnerable communities.

The Green Connection recommends that section 29(1) be revised to make reference to section 24, as well as to sections 17(3), 18(3), 19(1)(a) and 22(6).

The Green Connection recommends that section 29 be revised to make specific provision for meaningful consultation with communities potentially affected by climate change, and especially historically vulnerable and disadvantaged communities that do not have access to the Gazette or newspapers (such as small-scale fishing communities), and who are unlikely to have the necessary means or knowledge to participate meaningfully by way of a notice and comment public participation process.

[We attach our comments to the DFFE portfolio committee on the climate change bill in the national assembly.](#) These comments are also submitted to the NCOP as our substantive comments.

Given the urgency of climate change crisis and the need to act rapidly, the Green Connection is of the view that although there are some concerns, the bill should not be delayed.

The green Connection would also like an opportunity to present to the NCOP committee at any public hearings that take place.

Yours sincerely,

Lisa Makaula

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