

*These notes refer to the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland)  
2022 (c.31) which received Royal Assent on 6 June 2022*

# Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022

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## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### BACKGROUND AND POLICY OBJECTIVES

4. Climate change is a defining crisis of our time on a global and national scale. In June 2019, the UK amended<sup>1</sup> the Climate Change Act 2008 to set a ‘net zero target’ which commits the UK to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by “at least” 100 per cent below 1990 levels by 2050. While the Climate Change Act 2008 extends to Northern Ireland, specific greenhouse gas emission reduction targets for Northern Ireland are not included in it, or any other legislation.
5. In order to address this legislative gap, the Northern Ireland Executive, through the *New Decade, New Approach* agreement, made a commitment that it will ‘introduce legislation and targets for reducing carbon emissions in line with the Paris Climate Change Accord’. Under the Climate Change section at Appendix 2 of that agreement it further states that ‘The Executive should bring forward a Climate Change Act to give environmental targets a strong legal underpinning’.
6. Northern Ireland is not immune to the severity of the impacts of a changing climate and it is important that it plays its part in the global and UK effort to tackle climate change. The Act aims to achieve this by creating a framework that will establish a pathway to achieving emission reduction targets which will ensure that Northern Ireland makes a contribution to the achievement of the UK 2050 Net Zero target. In doing so this will help to ensure that Northern Ireland develops a greener, low carbon circular economy in which the environment can prosper and be protected.

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<sup>1</sup> Through the Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019