

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd, yr Amgylchedd a Seilwaith | Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee

Bil yr Amgylchedd (Ansawdd Aer a Seinweddau) (Cymru) | The Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Bill

Ymateb gan Unigolyn | Evidence from Individual

General principles

What are your views on the general principles of the Bill, and is there a need for legislation to deliver the stated policy intention?

There is a need to protect the Environment, but there is no justification for using the Environment as a new funding source for the Welsh Government and councils. Financial penalties are mentioned 31 times in the bill, and appear to be the only penalty that would be applied. Financial penalties are discriminatory and affect poorer people far more than the rich who would be happy to pay a fine to e.g. run their fashionable log burner. We must also not restrict peoples ability to travel long distances as freely and easily as they could via car in recent decades, else they will be confined to their 20 minute neighbourhood and less likely to see the natural landscapes of Wales that we want to protect. This will lead to less willing on their behalf to want to protect them as a source of national pride.

What are your views on the Bill's provisions (set out according to sections below), in particular are they workable and will they deliver the stated policy intention?

National air quality targets (sections 1 to 7)

Air quality needs improving, but let's take actions that don't make it worse, such as implementing low speed limits, causing increased fuel use at lower gears due to greater friction on the drivetrain, and riding brakes downhill that produce particulates, where there is no benefit. Let's look to improve the flow of traffic by removing pinch points that cause stop/start, slow/fast driving - synchronise traffic lights, remove speed bumps and narrowings. No one blames too much water for a blocked hosepipe.

Promoting awareness about air pollution (section 8)

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National air quality strategy (sections 9 to 11)

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Air quality regulations (section 12)

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Local air quality management (sections 13 to 15)

Air quality needs improving, but let's take actions that don't make it worse, such as implementing low speed limits, causing increased fuel use at lower gears due to greater friction on the drivetrain, and riding brakes downhill that produce particulates, where there is no benefit. Let's look to improve the flow of traffic by removing pinch points that cause stop/start, slow/fast driving - synchronise traffic lights, remove speed bumps and narrowings. No one blames too much water for a blocked hosepipe.

Smoke control (sections 16 to 18)

Remain as a criminal offence so the penalty has equal weighting to the rich and the poor.

Vehicle emissions (sections 19 to 21)

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National soundscapes strategy (sections 22 and 23)

Interesting in principle but can't see how e.g. building the South Wales Metro at night is compatible with this.

Strategic noise map and noise action plans (sections 24)

Interesting in principle but can't see how e.g. building the South Wales Metro at night is compatible with this.

General provisions (sections 25 to 28);

Tackle the big causes of pollution, and don't use this as a front to implement 20 minute neighbourhoods. Improve traffic flow through better road planning. Build better public transport that's fit for all not just those who want to get to Cardiff Bay.

What are the potential barriers to the implementation of the Bill's provisions and how does the Bill take account of them?

Barriers are that financial penalties are only significant for a portion of the population, that people don't trust you're doing this for benefit -only to find new ways to collect fines/charges, and that you're using sticks but no carrots.

How appropriate are the powers in the Bill for Welsh Ministers to make subordinate legislation (as set out in Chapter 5 of Part 1 of the Explanatory Memorandum)?

Appropriate

Are any unintended consequences likely to arise from the Bill?

Yes - See previous answers

What are your views on the Welsh Government's assessment of the financial implications of the Bill as set out in Part 2 of the Explanatory Memorandum?

You'll trash the economy even further. Tourism, and manufacturing will be decimated. What will take their place?