

REI's Climate Action Plan Policy Requests to Support Renewable Heat

The policy asks outlined below represent the views of REI and its members working in the renewable heat sector. This comes from both the on-the-ground experience of the industry and the results of the REI Renewable Heat Plan '40 by 30'. It does not cover any industries or technologies not currently represented by REI members, such as industrial electric heating solutions or hydrogen.

Targets:

- Sector Target: 40% renewable heat target by 2030, with sub-targets for each renewable heat technology/source.
- District Heating Target – set a sub-target of 10% district heating by 2030 based on the outputs of the SEAI national heat study

Regulation (planning, building, roads, etc):

- Zoning - Local Authorities to zone suitable areas for district heating based on the outputs of the national level SEAI Heat Study.
- Building Regulations - waste heat is seen as equivalent to renewables, and given a PEF of 0, or otherwise determined by the SEAI. Procedure and assessment of district heating system carbon, renewable and primary energy to be responsibility of SEAI.
- Planning – Update the Roads and Traffic Act to include permission to lay district energy pipes. Classify district energy pipes 'exempt development' in Planning Act.
- Geothermal Regulation - Quickly fix regulatory, planning and permitting regs particularly for geothermal, but other RES where there are issues.
- Solid fuels - Immediate introduction and implementation of the proposed Solid Fuel Regulation to encourage replacement of fossil fuels with low carbon and renewable fuels and address air quality concerns.

Financial and Grant Support:

- Renewable Heat Obligation: Immediate introduction of an ambitious Renewable Heat Obligation (RHO) scheme.
- District heating financial support – 1) offer district heating customers the same grant to connect to a district heating network as those who install a heat pump and 2) developers of district heating to receive a one-off payment of €200/MWh of heat consumed for the piping in public roads associated with district heating
- Heat Pumps Financial support – residential heat pump grants scheme has to be explored and to see how can it be made more successful, allowing for higher HLIs to be used
- SSRH reform: 1) commercial heat pump grants to be reviewed and revised to find ways to increase uptake, 2) broaden the scope and support payment bands of the scheme to attract larger non ETS heat users to adopt renewable heating solutions such as biomass and biogas, 3) expend more budget on marketing the SSRH programme to increase uptake
- Geothermal Financial support: Incentivise geothermal renewable heating at a level that at least equalises LCOE

Pilot Project Support and Incentives:

- Geothermal pilots projects: Incentivise commercial and industrial pilots and demonstrators with both grants and incentives (carbon credits etc), in which customers, communities,

research orgs, businesses are collaborating and integrating; support development of geothermal supply chain.

- Bioenergy Pilot Projects: Support pilot projects to explore the financial and technical potential of bioenergy carbon capture and storage given the importance and potential of this technology to contribute to carbon neutrality by mid-century and beyond as outlined in the IPCC Climate Change and Land Report.
- Residential bioenergy incentives: Introduce an incentive scheme for eco-design appliance to replace open fires and inefficient stoves to contribute to achieving an affordable decarbonisation in the residential sector.

Responsible Bodies:

- District Energy Network – Designate a body to own the district energy pipes in public roads after they are commissioned. Develop standards for district energy pipework.
- Electricity infrastructure – to ensure that there is adequate planning and investment put in place to support the deployment of 600,000 domestic heat pumps

Training/resources:

- Training for heat pump installation – Appropriate training to be supported, facilitated and put in place by government to enable the retrofit of 400,000 heat pumps by 2030 to address the major skills shortage.
- Geothermal resources: Establish a national, publicly accessible database containing all geothermal information (well and energy usage data).