

**NB: Unofficial translation, legally binding texts are those in Finnish and Swedish
Ministry of the Environment, Finland**

Climate Change Act

609/2015

Section 1

Purpose and goals of the Act

- (1) The purpose of this Act is:
 - 1) to establish a framework for the planning of climate change policy in Finland and the monitoring of its implementation;
 - 2) to enhance and coordinate the activities of state authorities in planning measures that are aimed at mitigation of climate change and adaptation to it, and at the monitoring of the implementation of these measures;
 - 3) to strengthen the opportunities of Parliament and the public to participate in and affect the planning of climate change policy in Finland.

- (2) The goals of the Act and of the planning of climate change policy carried out in accordance with it are:
 - 1) to ensure the fulfilment of obligations under the treaties binding on Finland and under the legislation of the European Union to reduce and monitor greenhouse gases;
 - 2) to reduce anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, to mitigate climate change through national actions, and to adapt to climate change.

Section 2

Scope of application

- (1) This Act lays down provisions on the tasks of state authorities in drawing up climate change policy plans and ensuring their implementation.

- (2) In addition to the provisions of this Act on mitigation of or adaptation to climate change, the provisions laid down in other acts on these issues are to be followed.

- (3) Provisions on emissions of greenhouse gases in the emissions trading sector and measures taken to reduce them are included in the Emissions Trading Act (311/2011), the Act on Aviation Emissions Trading (34/2010), and the Act on the Use of the Kyoto Mechanisms (109/2007).

Section 3

Effects on other planning and decision-making

The plans drawn up under this Act are to be taken into account, in accordance with the separate provisions laid down in other legislation concerning them, in the planning and decision-making of measures carried out under other legislation that concern the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the mitigation of climate change and adaptation to climate change.

Section 4

Measures promoting the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change

In their activities, the state authorities shall promote the implementation of plans in accordance with this Act as far as possible.

Section 5

Definitions

In this Act:

- 1) *greenhouse gases* means carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, sulphur hexafluoride, nitrogen trifluoride and other gaseous components of the atmosphere, both natural and anthropogenic, which absorb and transmit infrared radiation, as provided in the international obligations that are currently in force and binding on Finland;
- 2) *climate change* means the change in climate which is caused by alterations in the composition of the earth's atmosphere that are a result of either direct or indirect anthropogenic impacts and which exceeds the natural climate variability during comparable periods of time;
- 3) *mitigation of climate change* means preventing the generation of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions and preventing them from entering the atmosphere, and also mitigating or eliminating other effects of climate change;
- 4) *adaptation to climate change* means measures taken to prepare for and adapt to climate change and its effects, and measures that can be used for benefitting from the effects of climate change;
- 5) *policy measures* refer to those measures of the state authorities that affect greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to climate change;
- 6) *national greenhouse gas inventory system* means the national inventory system referred to in Article 3(2) of Regulation (EU) No 525/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on a mechanism for monitoring and reporting greenhouse gas emissions and for reporting other information at national and Union level relevant to climate change and repealing Decision No 280/2004/EC;
- 7) *system for policies and measures and projections* means the system for policies and measures and projections referred to in Article 3(15) of the Regulation specified above in paragraph 6;
- 8) *emissions trading sector* means the emissions referred to in sections 2–5 of the Emissions Trading Act within the scope of that Act, and the emissions referred to in section 2 of the Act on Aviation Emissions Trading within the scope of that Act;
- 9) *sectors outside emissions trading* means the greenhouse gas emissions referred to in Article 2(1) of Decision No 406/2009/EC of the European Parliament and of the

Council on the effort of Member States to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions to meet the Community's greenhouse gas emission reduction commitments up to 2020.

Section 6

Planning system for climate change policy

(1) The planning system for climate change policy, in accordance with this Act, consists of the following parts:

- 1) a long-term climate change policy plan;
- 2) a medium-term climate change policy plan based on the projections and goals of the plan referred to in paragraph 1;
- 3) the national adaptation plan for climate change.

(2) The purpose of the planning system for climate change policy is to determine the reduction targets for greenhouse gas emissions and the goals of adaptation to climate change, as well as the measures required to reach these goals and targets in different administrative branches, as provided below in more detail.

(3) The goal of the planning system for climate change policy is to ensure that the total anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere is reduced in Finland by at least 80 per cent by 2050 compared to 1990 levels. If an international treaty binding on Finland or European Union legislation includes a total reduction target for greenhouse gas emissions set for 2050 that differs from that mentioned above, it must be used as the basis for the long-term emissions reduction target of the planning system. The goal of planning the adaptation to climate change is to promote the management of risks caused by climate change and sector-specific adaptation to climate change.

(4) The goal of drawing up climate change policy plans is to attempt to mitigate climate change and adapt to it in a cost-effective way. The goals and measures relating to the mitigation of climate change and adaptation to it included in the plans shall be based on research data, so that the progression of climate change, its probable positive and negative effects, the related risks and hazards, and the possibilities to prevent accidents and limit their adverse effects are taken into account. In planning related to agricultural production, it shall be ensured that the measures related to mitigating climate change are planned and implemented so that they do not compromise domestic food production or global food security.

(5) In addition, the following issues shall be taken into account in drawing up climate change policy plans:

- 1) obligations under international treaties binding on Finland and under the legislation of the European Union;
- 2) information generated in the national inventory system for greenhouse gas emissions and in the national system for policies and measures and projections;
- 3) current research data on climate change, and assessments of developments in international climate change policies and European Union climate change policies;
- 4) environmental, economic and social factors based on the principle of sustainable development;
- 5) the development and level of technology related to the reduction of greenhouse gases, mitigation of climate change and adaptation to climate change;

- 6) other essential factors in terms of societal development.

Section 7 **Long-term plan for climate change policy**

(1) At least once every ten years, the Government shall approve a long-term plan for climate change policy on the key policy measures focusing on the emissions trading sector and the sectors outside emissions trading, by means of which the goals referred to in section 6(3) concerning the long-term reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change shall be achieved.

(2) In addition to that provided in subsection 1, the long-term plan for climate change policy shall present the following issues:

- 1) the greenhouse gas emissions scenarios to 2050 based on the reduction target for greenhouse gas emissions referred to in section 6(3), and the key sector-specific options for progress in order to reach the long-term emissions reduction target;
- 2) a description of the international and European operating environment for climate change policy and the outlook for its development in the long term;
- 3) an assessment of the outlook for developing methods for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the perspective of Finland;
- 4) other issues considered necessary.

Section 8 **National adaptation plan for climate change**

(1) The Government shall approve the national adaptation plan for climate change at least once every ten years.

(2) The adaptation plan shall include a risk and vulnerability review, as well as action plans on adaptations specific to each administrative branch, if necessary.

Section 9 **Medium-term plan for climate change policy**

(1) The Government shall approve a medium-term plan for climate change policy once per electoral term. The plan shall include an action plan that proposes the measures for reduction of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions and mitigation of climate change in the sectors outside emissions trading, and projections of greenhouse gas emissions and the effects of policy measures on the emissions.

(2) The climate change action plan referred to in subsection 1 above shall present the following issues:

- 1) commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions under international treaties and under the legislation of the European Union;
- 2) current policy measures directed at the sectors outside emissions trading for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and assessing their effectiveness;
- 3) any new policy measures directed at the sectors outside emissions trading for reducing greenhouse gas emissions that may be necessary to reach the greenhouse

gas emissions reduction targets in accordance with the long-term climate change policy plan referred to in section 7 above and in accordance with the commitments referred to in paragraph 1 of this subsection, and an assessment of their effectiveness;

4) other issues considered necessary.

(3) The following issues are presented in the projections of greenhouse gas emissions referred to in subsection 1 above:

- 1) information on the trend in total greenhouse gas emissions in Finland since 1990;
- 2) information on trends in emissions in the emissions trading sector and in the sectors outside emissions trading since 2005;
- 3) a projection of total greenhouse gas emissions and, separately, emissions projections for sectors outside emissions trading during the 10–20 years after the approval of the plan, based on current policy measures;
- 4) emissions projections for sectors outside emissions trading during the 10–20 years after the approval of the plan, based on current policy measures and on new policy measures referred to in subsection 2, paragraph 3;
- 5) other issues considered necessary.

(4) The medium-term plan for climate change policy must be coordinated with energy and transport policy planning as necessary.

Section 10

Preparing the climate change policy plans

(1) When the climate change policy plans referred to in sections 7–9 above are prepared, the public must be given an opportunity to review the draft plan and submit opinions on it in writing. In addition, a statement on the draft plan must be requested from the key authorities and organisations, and from the scientific expert body referred to in section 16.

(2) Provisions on assessing the environmental impacts of the climate change policy plans are laid down in the Act on the Environmental Impact Assessment of Plans and Programmes by the Authorities (200/2005). When the plans are drawn up, their economic, social and other effects must also be assessed to the required extent.

Section 11

Report to Parliament

(1) The Government shall submit a report to Parliament on the long-term plan for climate change policy referred to in section 7 that it has approved. If necessary, the information on the national adaptation plan for climate change referred to in section 8 shall be included in the report.

(2) The Government shall submit a report to Parliament on the medium-term plan for climate change policy referred to in section 9 that it has approved.

Section 12

Monitoring the implementation of the climate change policy plans

- (1) The Government shall monitor the implementation of the climate change policy plans referred to in sections 7–9 to determine whether the policy measures taken in accordance with the plans achieve the goals on mitigation of climate change and adaptation to it. If necessary, based on the monitoring, the Government decides on additional measures required to reach the goals.
- (2) The Government shall monitor the sufficiency of the emissions reduction target referred to in section 6(3) based on current research data on the progression of climate change, and it shall ensure that the target fulfils the obligations under the international treaties binding on Finland and under the legislation of the European Union.
- (3) It should be monitored how well the projections of greenhouse gas emissions included in the climate change policy plans referred to in sections 7 and 9 have been realized by using the data of the national greenhouse gas inventory system. In addition, the information generated in the national system for policies and measures and projections shall be taken into account.
- (4) The public shall be sufficiently informed of the results of the monitoring.

Section 13

Amending the climate change policy plans

- (1) The Government shall amend the climate change policy plans referred to in sections 7–9 in accordance with the decision on additional measures referred to in section 12(1). The provisions laid down in section 10 on the procedure to be followed in preparing the plans are applied in any amendments to the plans.
- (2) In addition to the provisions of subsection 1, the climate change policy plans referred to in sections 7–9 may also be amended because of incomplete information of minor importance included in them. Such an item may be amended without following the procedure in accordance with section 10.

Section 14

Annual climate change report

- (1) Each calendar year, the Government shall provide information to Parliament on the trends in emissions and the achievement of emissions reduction targets included in the medium-term plan for climate change policy referred to in section 9, and on the additional measures required to reach these targets referred to in section 12(1) (annual climate change report).
- (2) As a part of the annual climate change report, the Government shall provide information on the implementation of policy measures referred to in section 9(1) above to Parliament every other year.

(3) At least once per electoral term, an assessment of the sufficiency and effectiveness of the adaptation measures included in the adaptation plan, referred to in section 8, is to be included in the annual climate change report, as well as, if necessary, a report specific to each administrative branch of the implementation of the planned adaptation measures.

Section 15 **Tasks of the authorities**

(1) Each ministry prepares a section concerning its administrative branch for the climate change policy plans referred to in sections 7–9 and provides the information on its administrative branch for the annual climate change report in accordance with section 14. Regarding the coordination and compilation of climate change policy plans, the Ministry of Employment and the Economy is responsible for the long-term plan for climate change policy referred to in section 7, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry is responsible for the national adaptation plan for climate change referred to in section 8, and the Ministry of the Environment is responsible for the medium-term plan for climate change policy referred to in section 9. The Ministry of the Environment is responsible for compiling the annual climate change report.

(2) Within its mandate, each ministry is responsible for the guidance and monitoring of the implementation of plans in accordance with this Act.

(3) Statistics Finland acts as the responsible body for the national inventory system for greenhouse gas emissions.

(4) More specific provisions on the tasks of the authorities referred to in this section may be issued by government decree.

Section 16 **Scientific expert body**

(1) The Government shall appoint a scientific and independent expert body to support the planning of climate change policy and the related decision-making. The name of the expert body is “Suomen ilmastopaneeli” (Finland’s Climate Panel), and its task is to collect and itemise research data on the mitigation of climate change and adaptation to it for the planning and monitoring of climate change policy. The expert body can also carry out other tasks concerning the generation of basic information on climate change.

(2) Different fields of science are to be represented in the expert body. The members of the expert body are appointed for a fixed period of time.

(3) More specific provisions on the tasks and composition of the scientific expert body may be issued by government decree.

Section 17 **Entry into force**

This Act enters into force on the 1st of June 2015.