

FEBRUARY 2026

CONSISTENT PARIS TEST ASSESSMENT OF THE 2024 PROPOSAL FOR IRELAND'S 2031-2040 CARBON BUDGETS

Executive Summary
Paul R. Price

Executive Summary: ‘Consistent Paris Test assessment of the 2024 Proposal for Ireland’s 2031–2040 carbon budgets’ – February 2026.

A working paper research report by: **Paul R Price**

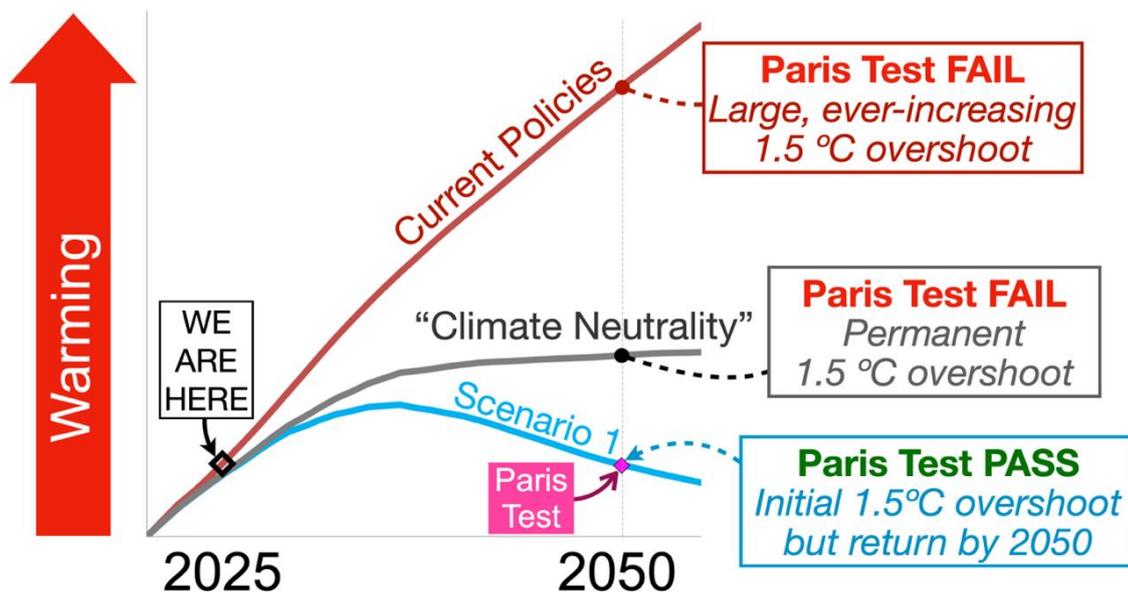
See <https://ejni.net/publications/> for pdf download of the full report.

Human activities reliant on fossil fuel energy, intensive agriculture, and extractive land use are continuing to cause dangerous global heating from emissions to the atmosphere of heat trapping greenhouse gases (GHGs). The principal GHGs are carbon dioxide (CO₂), nitrous oxide (N₂O), and methane (CH₄). Under Ireland’s 2021 climate Act, the Climate Change Advisory Council (CCAC) is charged with recommending an ongoing programme of national carbon budgeting that is “*consistent with*” meeting Article 2 of the Paris Agreement (PA), by pursuing efforts to limit global average temperature increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels, “*implemented to reflect equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.*” Therefore, the CCAC is required to show how its recommended carbon budgets for the principal GHGs are aligned with achieving a ‘fair-share’ national 1.5 °C goal. If Governments’ policies across all sectors can ensure that the *sectoral emission ceilings* and the overarching *five-year carbon budgets* are met without fail, they can argue they are at least achieving a minimum commitment to international climate justice. Global heating has reached 1.3 °C above pre-industrial levels; therefore, limiting to a national fair-share 1.5°C goal before 2100 already requires urgent action to minimise 1.5°C overshoot and subsequent net warming reduction to return to it.

Based on the CCAC 2024 Proposal’s scenario data and applying the CCAC’s own *2021 Paris Test*, this technical report aims to provide a consistent evaluation of the CCAC’s first and second cycle carbon budget proposals, as set out in October 2021 and December 2024. This report addresses six key issues raised by the *2024 CCAC Proposal*, its *15 scenario Shortlist*, and the belated equity test in a July 2025 *CCAC Letter*. These issues are assessed through analyses of the key scenario emissions data and resultant FaIR climate model output temperature pathways. The 2024 Proposal’s Shortlist scenarios are found to exceed the already agreed, legally binding carbon budgets (CB1 and CB2) up to 2030, implying an urgent need for much stronger mitigation policies and measures to be included in the delayed Climate Action Plan (CAP2026). Only the deepest mitigation scenario in the Shortlist passes the 2021 Paris Test. Following a 2024 journal article, the test’s temperature commitment threshold in 2050 is adjusted downward from 0.23°C to a 0.15°C *Corrected 2021 Paris Test*. Based on the Proposal’s *Scenario 1* meeting this test, this is shown to be equivalent to a Corrected 2021 Paris Test 0.15 °C threshold FaIR temperature contribution in 2089. Thus, the Letter’s 0.23°C in 2100 is easier to meet, contrary to the Paris requirement for progressively increasing action. The CCAC’s *climate neutrality* interpretation is shown to be an insufficient test of climate action due to the resulting sustained overshoot of the national 1.5 °C fair share level defined by the 2021 Paris Test. This report’s analysis further shows that expressing proposed recommended carbon budgets in standard GWP100 CO₂e values alone is insufficient to guide climate action aligned with meeting the Paris Test threshold. Thus, explicit detail on the separate mitigation pathways for each of CO₂, N₂O and CH₄ is required for every

scenario. The Proposal's underpinning scenarios contradict any suggestion that 'temperature neutrality' is a sufficient 2050 goal for agricultural methane, or for the Agriculture sector overall.

The 2024 Proposal's Shortlist is shown to require far stronger near-term climate action than the Climate Action Plan is currently projected to achieve. However, this report also finds that much greater advisory clarity and explicit national 1.5°C fair share analysis is required from the CCAC if Ireland is to set out effective climate mitigation plans sufficient to meet Ireland's Paris commitments. If carbon budgets are missed, the 2021 Paris Test will continue to provide an enduring gauge of the extent of Irish climate governance failure. **The window for action to avoid dangerous climate change is closing rapidly. Limiting 1.5 °C overshoot will increase future societal resilience with far lower impact costs.**



The above graphic illustrates Corrected CCAC 2021 Paris Test assessment (GWP* analysis) of three alternative emissions scenarios for Ireland: **Current Policies** (from EPA data for the With Existing Measures scenario); **“Climate Neutrality”**, meeting the 2024 CCAC Proposal's temperature neutrality by 2050 definition; and **Scenario 1**, the deepest mitigation option within the CCAC Proposal's 15 scenario Shortlist. According to the CCAC, Scenario 1 is practicable given sufficient effective Government policies and significantly increased sectoral ambition to cut energy, agriculture and land emissions from now onward. Early, deep, and sustained cuts in annual in agri-methane emissions are crucial to net temperature return from overshoot.

Author and EJNI

Paul R Price: independent researcher on climate change science and climate action policy; Adjunct Faculty, School of Electronic Engineering, Dublin City University; and *pro bono* member of An Taisce climate committee since 2014. **EJNI** is an all-island platform for collaborative working between researchers, lawyers, and civil society with the goal of addressing shared environmental challenges and root causes of social and environmental injustice across the island of Ireland. For more information on EJNI, visit our website: www.ejni.net or email admin@ejni.net