

## Executive is 'making a mockery' of energy goal

By [Rob Edwards](#)

**VITAL measures** to save energy and combat climate pollution in homes throughout Scotland are being so weakened by ministers that they could fall foul of European law.

That is the accusation being made by campaigners, who say Scotland is in danger of falling behind England and the rest of Europe in improving energy efficiency in buildings, despite promises by the Scottish Executive to make the fight against climate-wrecking pollution a priority.

By the beginning of next year, Scotland is meant to be introducing a series of conservation improvements under the European Commission's directive on energy performance in buildings. A key requirement is to issue energy certificates when a building is constructed, rented or sold.

The certificates, which could number 200,000 a year in Scotland, would say how well or badly a building was insulated, and give guidance on how to save energy.

But ministers are planning to delay the introduction of the certificates for at least a year because of an alleged lack of independent experts. They are also proposing a system under which householders would fill in their own certificates .

Andrew Warren, the director of the Association for the Conservation of Energy in London, said: "The concept of DIY energy certification is completely regressive. It would be a case of garbage in, garbage out. It is highly unlikely that what is proposed will even approach compliance with the directive."

The Sunday Herald understands that EC officials have already suggested that self-certification would breach the directive.

Self-certification "makes a mockery of the directive's aims", alleged Lucy Burnett, of Friends of the Earth Scotland.

"We fail to see how this could be robust information, how the public are well enough informed to carry out this task, and how self-certification could be defined as independent." Burnett also criticised ministers for delaying the introduction of certificates .

"If the Scottish Executive is as serious as it claims about cutting climate pollution, then it certainly doesn't show in the half-hearted way they are attempting to implement this directive," she said.

The Executive did not deny that self-certification was being considered. "All avenues are currently being explored," said a spokesman. "However, no decisions have been taken on a final approach."

But he insisted that whatever system was adopted, it would involve independent experts and would be compliant with the directive.

"We welcome the measures to be introduced by the directive, many of which we are already dealing with in Scotland," he stated.

The spokesman confirmed that ministers intended to make use of "pragmatic provisions" in the directive to delay the introduction of certificates. Scotland's current building insulation standards were the most demanding in the UK, he argued.

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