

Your submission to Zero Carbon Bill

Reference no: 9113

Submitter Type: Individual

Clause

1. What process should the Government use to set a new emissions reduction target in legislation?

Position

The Government sets a 2050 target in legislation now

Notes

The time for meaningful action is running very short, we need to act rapidly after years of stalling, we cannot afford to wait any longer or our opportunity for action will slip away.

Clause

2. If the Government sets a 2050 target now, which is the best target for New Zealand?

Position

Net Zero Emissions - Net zero emissions across all greenhouse gases by 2050

Notes

Agricultural emissions (Mainly methane and nitrous oxide) make up nearly 50% of New Zealand's emissions and therefore the reduction of these gases must absolutely be included in our target also. If this whole process is to be successful and make the emissions reduction that is required then all emissions must be included in the target. The agricultural sector will most likely be strongly opposed to this - they have slowed this process for too long, and at the same time continued to increase their emissions. This trend must be turned around immediately, this will only be achieved if all greenhouse gases are included in the net zero target.

Clause

3. How should New Zealand meet its targets?

Position

Domestic emissions reductions (including from new forest planting) and using some emissions reductions from overseas (international carbon units) that have strong environmental safeguards

Notes

Perhaps emissions reductions from overseas can be used initially, but as we make our own transition we can phase off them at some point well before 2050, with a well planned budget that we commit to following. After the fraudulent carbon units that we've bought in the past I am hesitant to suggest this, but see that as long as they are strongly safeguarded then perhaps they are a reasonable interim measure. Our domestic emissions reductions must however be the primary source of our reductions, with international carbon units only used as a top up where and if we cannot achieve our emissions reductions through domestic reductions only.

Clause

4. Should the Zero Carbon Bill allow the 2050 target to be revised if circumstances change?

Position

No

Notes

Experts agree that we must reach net zero (all emissions) by 2050 at the latest. However it is also becoming increasingly evident that we must not only reduce our emissions, we have left this transition so late that we now must find ways to actively remove greenhouse gases already present. The only revision that I would be comfortable with is an even more ambitious revision, where we are successfully removing greenhouse gases at a faster rate than we are emitting them, therefore we have a 'net negative x' emissions target. My fear is that if we allow the target to be revised then future governments will simply lower their ambitions, as the previous government consistently showed it was happy to do - Tim Groser was quoted as saying that nothing would change in New Zealand after the Paris agreement and that we could carry on with business as usual!

Clause

5. The Government proposes that three emissions budgets of five years each (i.e. covering the next 15 years) be in place at any given time. Do you agree with this proposal?

Position

Yes

Notes

Clause

6. Should the Government be able to alter the last emissions budget (i.e. furthest into the future)?

Position

Yes - each incoming Government should have the option to review the third budget in the sequence

Notes

The only changes that should be allowed should be for increasingly ambitious budgeting, or for changes within a specified small range. Flexibility may well provide an opportunity for future governments who are not fully committed to this process to soften targets and let big polluters away with failing to reduce emissions. This must not be allowed to happen, therefore budget reviews must have limitations.

Clause

7. Should the Government have the ability to review and adjust the second emissions budget within a specific range under exceptional circumstances? See p36 Our Climate Your Say

Position

Yes

Notes

I hold similar concerns to those stated in question 6 above. It is essential that these changes must be within a specific small range, and in order that circumstances be deemed 'exceptional circumstances' they must meet strict pre-determined criteria.

Clause

8. Do you agree with the considerations we propose that the Government and the Climate Change Commission take into account when advising on and setting budgets? See p44 Our Climate Your Say

Position

Yes

Notes

In accordance with the Paris Agreement I would like to see the Climate Change Commission paying particular attention to how any decisions made will effect lower socio-economic groups, as well as those geographically at most risk (eg Northland fits both of these groups). There is no mention of Biodiversity - perhaps this fits under 'Scientific Knowledge related to Climate Change - but I would like to see a Climate Change Commission considering impacts of decisions on biodiversity.

Clause

9. Should the Zero Carbon Bill require Governments to set out plans within a certain timeframe to achieve the emissions budgets?

Position

Yes

Notes**Clause**

10. What are the most important issues for the Government to consider in setting plans to meet budgets? For example, who do we need to work with, what else needs to be considered?

Notes

True and meaningful democracy --> Effective public engagement so that all New Zealanders are on board and supportive of the transition, despite the changes that will occur and challenges that will arise. We need to find ways to overcome the significant power that big lobby groups hold to influence government (eg Federated Farmers, Construction, Oil and Transport industries, Tiwai Aluminium smelter) Incentives and penalties need to be made clear, and structures in place to enforce these, otherwise targets will not be met - as is often the case with environmental standards.

Clause

11. The Government has proposed that the Climate Change Commission advises on and monitors New Zealand's progress towards its goals. Do you agree with these functions? See p42 Our Climate Your Say

Position

Yes

Notes**Clause**

12. What role do you think the Climate Change Commission should have in relation to the New Zealand Emissions Trading Scheme (NZ ETS)?

Position

Advising the Government on policy settings in the NZ ETS

Notes

With firm requirement that government publicly justifies and provide rationale for deviating from the advice of the Climate Change Commission. Once again I am fearful that some governments will use this as a loop hole to deviate regularly and significantly from advice given by the Commission, perhaps circumstances and justifications for deviating from advice must meet certain pre-determined criteria. There must be some clear regulatory tool in place to prevent unnecessary deviation from advice given by the Commission, otherwise unambitious governments will ignore advice.

Clause

13. The Government has proposed that Climate Change Commissioners need to have a range of essential and desirable expertise. Do you agree with the proposed expertise? See p45 Our Climate Your Say

Position

Yes

Notes

Clause

14. Do you think the Zero Carbon Bill should cover adapting to climate change?

Position

Yes

Notes

Clause

15. The Government has proposed a number of new functions to help us adapt to climate change. Do you agree with the proposed functions? See p47 Our Climate Your Say

Position

Yes

Notes

Clause

16. Should we explore setting up a targeted adaptation reporting power that could see some organisations share information on their exposure to climate change risks?

Position

Yes

Notes

Clause

Do you have any other comments you'd like to make?

Notes

There is very little discussion here of how emitters will be held accountable if they fail to reach targets. I would expect that the Zero Carbon Bill will include clear legislation regarding this, and that penalties will be enforced. Without clear penalties then big emitters will simply go on with business as usual.

You have elected to withhold your personal details from publication.