Dear Minister,

The New Zealand Chapter of the Environmental Institute of Australia and New Zealand (EIANZ) strongly supports the adoption of a legally binding climate law.

While New Zealand's contribution to global emissions is small and therefore any contribution we make to global emissions reduction will be minor, New Zealand could - and we argue should - choose to be a moral leader rather than a reluctant follower on this issue. We owe it to our Pacific Island neighbours, to nature and to future generations to lead the way and put moral pressure on the governments of larger economies to act with urgency.

It is the Chapter’s view that Government should set a 2050 target of net zero emissions in legislation now. The law must be fair, ambitious and consistent with the climate science and international frameworks by including all gases and all sectors.

We support the Government’s proposed emissions budgets that set out pathways over a 5-year period. The law should require the Government to set out how it will achieve the emissions budgets, including transition pathways. Climate budgets should be legally binding.

We strongly support the establishment of a Climate Commission. The Commission should advise the government on targets and policy planning. The Government should be required to publicly respond to, and provide rationale when it deviates from, the Commission’s advice. The Climate Commission should also act as an independent watchdog, publishing progress reports and highlighting problems.

The law should cover adapting to the impacts of climate change. This should involve the setting of a National Adaptation Plan that sets a clear direction to local government and helps co-ordinate the responses across different sectors.

Consensus on the climate law across political parties is important and should be a priority. We can't afford to waste time by passing strong legislation now only for it to be revoked by a future government.

We support the ‘firewall’ principle, that New Zealand's targets must be achieved by actual cuts in our own emissions, and not through the purchase of overseas carbon credits or an over-reliance on forests as carbon sinks.

The science on climate change has been clear for sometime now. New Zealand is overdue for a meaningful response and can and should lead the way for our own people, our Pacific neighbours and the global community to which we belong.
About EIANZ

Founded in 1987, EIANZ is a professional association of some 2000 environmental practitioners from across Australia and New Zealand. We provide opportunities for professional and academic dialogue across all sectors of the environmental industry.

A significant initiative of EIANZ is the Certified Environmental Practitioner (CEnvP) Scheme, which is Australasia's first accreditation scheme designed exclusively for environmental practitioners, and recognises environmental professionals in line with their professional counterparts from engineering, accounting, planning and architecture.

Yours sincerely,

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President New Zealand Chapter EIANZ