SUBMISSION ON THE ZERO CARBON BILL

Introduction

1. The Dunedin City Council (DCC) appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on a Zero Carbon Bill. This submission outlines the DCC’s approach to reducing Dunedin’s emissions and provides responses to specific questions regarding a Zero Carbon Bill outlined in the Discussion Document.

Dunedin City Council positions

2. In February 2018, the DCC resolved to set a target for Dunedin to be net carbon zero by 2050, as part of the DCC’s commitment to the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate Change and Energy. This position aligns with the first option proposed in the Discussion Document.

3. The DCC also resolved to realign its position with respect to short-lived greenhouse gases (including methane), if this is necessary, to align with a national position once determined.

4. The DCC is also intending to develop five-yearly carbon budgets in consultation with city stakeholders, and will develop an action plan to deliver on the target and budgets, as part of the DCC’s commitment to the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate Change and Energy.

5. When consulting with stakeholders prior to resolving its Dunedin city target, the DCC found that there was stronger support from stakeholders for domestic (and local) emission reductions than for the purchase of international carbon units.

Submissions with regard to a Zero Carbon Bill

6. The DCC supports the formation of a Climate Commission, and agrees with its proposed advisory functions, including a stronger role on adaptation monitoring.

7. The DCC supports the Government setting a target of net zero emissions by 2050. While we accept that short and long-lived gases have different effects, recent research suggests methane can cause sea-levels to rise centuries after it stops being emitted. Stabilising emissions will be inadequate to try and stabilise our changing climate.

8. We also recognise the ambition of the Farming Leaders Group – including representatives from Dairy NZ; Federated Farmers; Beef & Lamb New Zealand; Fonterra Shareholders Council, Irrigation NZ and Horticulture NZ – in supporting a net zero emissions target for the agrifood sector by 2050. We need to be supporting our agricultural sector in achieving these ambitions.
9. The DCC supports the proposal to set multiple five-yearly budgets and require Governments to set plans to achieve these budgets within timeframe.

10. The DCC supports a legislative requirement for the Government to develop national adaptation plans that prioritise actions based on regular risk assessments.

11. The DCC supports a fair and inclusive transition to a low-carbon economy which does not disproportionately disadvantage Dunedin’s socially and economically vulnerable communities. Hence the DCC supports a Climate Commission and the Government ensuring that sufficient support and opportunities are available to those affected by inevitable changes in the labour market. Achieving the targets should remain the primary goal, with adequate support, ensuring a ‘just transition’.

12. That said, we understand that the evidence base upon which the targets and carbon budgets are built is constantly evolving. We support adjustments being made accordingly, so long as they remain consistent with both the scientific consensus and our international commitments.

Conclusion

13. The DCC supports the Government’s decision in creating the Zero Carbon Bill that provides New Zealand with the framework to be able to respond to the challenges of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

14. The DCC looks forward to the adoption of the Zero Carbon Bill and working with the Government to deliver on the determined targets and plans.

Yours sincerely

Dave Cull
Mayor of Dunedin