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Setting New Zealand's post-2020 climate change target

Submission

Date 16 May 2015

To Hon Tim Groser, Minister for Climate Change issues

I ask you to adopt a minimum target of a 40% emissions reduction in net emissions below 1990 levels by 2030 – the minimum contribution required to keep us under 2 degrees global warming.

The Government consultation document portrays action on climate change as a cost to NZ households, but fails to quantify how much it will cost us if we fail to take adequate action. I feel this is misleading.

Climate change is a threat to our economy, especially those sectors that depend on a stable climate, like farming and fisheries. Our farmers are most vulnerable to climate change, even if they often deny the problem. I do not agree that we need to maintain our current numbers of livestock at all cost. We could be producing organic dairy products for a premium price and reduce stock numbers and thus emissions from dairy.

I urge the Government to drop all plans to further develop our fossil fuel reserves. The world can only afford to burn 20% of currently explored reserves. In the age of climate change we should solely focus on the development of renewable energy sources.

Taking an active stance on emissions reductions, developing clean-tech solutions to climate change and capitalizing on these solutions would let us be at the forefront of the worldwide shift to a low carbon economy, giving us an economic advantage. Many reputable reports outline that countries can improve economic performance while cutting emissions. I am disappointed by the lack of vision in the consultation document.

It is embarrassing for us to be downplaying our responsibility for climate change saying New Zealand is too small to make a difference. The world is crying out for leadership and solutions. I want New Zealand to take an active role by setting an ambitious target, backed up by a solid plan on how to achieve that, focusing on real solutions. Trading carbon credits should be a last resort.

Climate change is the defining issue of our time. I would like to remind you that 200'000 Kiwis signed on to a national petition before the last round of public consultations in 2009. Kiwis want an ambitious emissions reduction target.

Contact Information:

Name Maurice Alach

Organisation (if applicable) Nelson Green Party

Address [Redacted]

Telephone [Redacted] Email No Email address