Consultation on setting New Zealand’s post-2020 climate change target

The Government is seeking views on New Zealand’s post-2020 climate change contribution under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

About the consultation

In December this year, countries will meet in Paris to establish a new international climate change agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

An important part of the agreement will be the individual contributions each country makes to address climate change. Specifically, all countries have been asked to put forward a target to reduce emissions after 2020 ahead of the negotiations in Paris. These are known as intended nationally determined contributions.

Find out more about the consultation

Read the discussion document which explains the main issues and describes New Zealand’s situation.

Submissions close at 5.00pm on Wednesday 3 June 2015.

Using this form

Please use this form to complete your submission. We recommend you create an account or use your existing login so you are able to:

- save your unfinished work
- review your responses
- receive a PDF version of your submission
- participate in future consultations by the Ministry.

You do not need to do this if you are going to complete this form in one sitting and you do not need a PDF of your submission.

Publishing and releasing submissions

All or part of any written submission (including names of submitters), may be published on the Ministry for the Environment’s website www.mfe.govt.nz. Unless you clearly specify otherwise in your submission, we will consider that you have consented to website posting of both your submission and your name.

Contents of submissions may be released to the public under the Official Information Act
1982 following requests to the Ministry for the Environment (including via email). Please advise if you have any objection to the release of any information contained in a submission and, in particular, which part(s) you consider should be withheld, together with the reason(s) for withholding the information. We will take into account all such objections when responding to requests for copies of, and information on, submissions to this consultation under the Official Information Act.

The Privacy Act 1993 applies certain principles about the collection, use and disclosure of information about individuals by various agencies, including the Ministry for the Environment. It governs access by individuals to information about themselves held by agencies. Any personal information you supply to the Ministry in the course of making a submission will be used by the Ministry only in relation to the matters covered by this consultation. Please clearly indicate in your submission if you do not wish your name to be included in any summary of submissions that the Ministry may publish.

Questions to guide your feedback

Your submission may address any aspect of the discussion document, but we would appreciate you paying particular attention to the questions posed throughout and listed in this form. You may answer some or all of the questions. To ensure your point of view is clearly understood, you should explain your rationale and provide supporting evidence where appropriate.

Contact information

Name

Organisation (if applicable)

Address

Telephone

Email

The content of my submission may be published but I do not want my name to be published.

Objectives for the contribution

1a. We have set the following three objectives for our contribution:

- it is seen as a fair and ambitious contribution – both by international and domestic audiences
- costs and impacts on society are managed appropriately
- it must guide New Zealand over the long term in the global transition to a low emissions
world.
Please see attached sheets for my answers to the questions below.
Do you agree with these objectives for our contribution? Yes No

1b. What is most important to you?

What would be a fair contribution for New Zealand?

2. What do you think the nature of New Zealand’s emissions and economy means for the level of target that we set?

How will our contribution affect New Zealanders?

3. What level of cost is appropriate for New Zealand to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions? For example, what would be a reasonable reduction in annual household consumption?

4. Of the opportunities for New Zealand to reduce its emissions (as outlined on page 15 of the discussion document), which do you think are the most likely to occur, or be most important for New Zealand?

Summary

5. How should New Zealand take into account the future uncertainties of technologies and costs when setting its target?
Other comments

6. Is there any further information you wish the Government to consider? Please explain.
Question 1

a) Whilst I agree with these objectives, I feel that the emphasis should be on the word "ambitious." When setting goals for our contribution I think N.Z. should punch above its weight and aim to become a truly "clean, green" country.

b) What is most important to me is that N.Z. becomes totally self-sufficient in its energy needs through renewable resources. This would fulfill objective 3 and the sooner we can do this the better.

Question 2

Because of New Zealand's economic dependence on primary industries, I feel we need to develop better agricultural and forestry practices to lower our emissions, such as small mixed farms and organic farms. However, I do not think that the challenges involved in doing this should excuse us from setting a high target for emissions reductions.

Question 3

In my opinion New Zealand's greenhouse gas emissions should be reduced by 40% below 1990 levels. I believe it is misleading to state that this will result in a cost of $1,800 per year per household because this does not take into account the considerable savings which can be made to a household by reducing its emissions. For example, early this year we purchased a second hand electric vehicle, which is saving us over $100 a
week in fuel costs. So our annual savings from reducing our emissions are over $5000 per year. In addition we are no longer pumping 2 tonnes of carbon into the atmosphere each year as we were with our previous vehicle.

**Question 4.**

New Zealand should be aiming for energy security through 100% renewable electricity by 2025 at the latest. Your discussion document includes a graph on page 9 which shows that 22% of our energy emissions come from energy, yet very little is said about this in the document. Eliminating this 22% should be an obvious place to start. The Huntly Power Station and similar high emitters should be retired for emergency use only. Instead, renewable energy projects like wind and solar should be encouraged by Government incentives. One good first step towards this would be to enforce a consistent, reliable and fair price for buying back solar power from individual households supplying to the national grid. This would provide security and encouragement to the growing group of people who are keen to install solar power on their rooves.

Electric vehicles are an obvious and easy way for N.Z to reduce carbon emissions since we have high electricity generation from renewables. They also
benefit the population and reduce health costs because they result in cleaner air. Replacing most of the vehicles in New Zealand with electric ones would greatly reduce our emissions but also reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and their volatile markets. If solar panels were also encouraged, households could change their electric vehicles from those. We have solar panels and find that on sunny days we can charge our electric vehicle and drive for free, creating zero emissions in the process. It has been our experience that even people who have no interest in climate change became very interested in buying an electric car when they hear that we are saving over $100 a week in fuel costs. So a key step to lowering our emissions would be to encourage the use of electric vehicles through the following initiatives:

- Education about the benefits of E.V.s.
- Provision of a public network for charging E.V.s, throughout N.Z. (We currently live near Thames and although we can currently drive to Auckland and recharge there, we cannot drive to Masterton to visit my elderly father as there are no public charge points on the way)
- Exempting E.V.'s from road user charges until 2030
- Removing the import duty on E.V.s (new and second hand) to make them more affordable.
Wherever possible I think that N.Z. should try to make emission reductions targets from within our own country rather than buying carbon credits and making ourselves vulnerable to fluctuations in the carbon trading market. I feel that in this way we would be forced to take more responsibility for our own emissions rather than feeling we can just pay our way out.

The forest sinks referred to in the document seem to be commercial forests but I advocate the large scale planting of N.Z. natives. If this were done along river and stream banks for example this would also help to stop erosion and improve water quality. The government could provide incentives for unproductive land which is prone to erosion to be planted in natives and at the same time walking and cycling tracks could be put into such areas to provide future tourism potential.

Another opportunity provided by reducing carbon emissions is the benefits to health and well-being (and the resultant reduction in health costs) afforded by having cleaner air, particularly in our cities. Additionally the benefits to individual well-being and happiness from partaking in reducing carbon emissions is not to be underestimated. I can confirm from my own experience that driving an electric vehicle, which you have charged for
free from your solar panels and which you know is producing zero emissions, gives one an enormous feeling of self-reliance, satisfaction and well-being.

Yet another opportunity not mentioned in the discussion document is the enormous tourism potential which would be provided were N.Z. to become a truly "clean, green" country with 100% renewable power generation. If we made a name for ourselves as an innovator in the fight against climate change, this would be a huge drawcard for those wanting to see how we manage it.

Question 5.
New Zealand should become as self-sufficient and self-reliant as possible in the energy and carbon offset areas to make it as secure as possible from global fluctuations. Technological advances in areas such as electric vehicles, solar panels and storage batteries are already so advanced that these items have become very reliable and will only reduce in price due to mass production in the future. Consequently I do not see that uncertainties in technology and costs should be an issue when setting N.Z's target.
Finally:

As you point out in your discussion document, since 1990 NZ’s total greenhouse gas emissions have grown by 21% despite the goal of reducing it to 5% below 1990 levels, by 2020, This demonstrates that without direct Government intervention we will not be able to achieve the dramatic reductions required to make an impact on global warming.

Consequently, I call on the Government to show effective leadership by introducing a number of major and innovative steps which will lead to a genuine reduction of emissions to 40% below 1990 levels by 2030. This is the minimum contribution required to keep global warming at below two degrees.