Setting New Zealand's post-2020 climate change target
Submission form

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Although I am happy to have this submission published as you see fit, I do not wish to have my name and contact details published at this time. I am sure you understand why.

The rationale of this submission

I have spent more than the last three years carefully researching the literature in order to validate the Global Warming Theory in my own mind.

I assure you that had my research come out in favour of the theory, I would be among the first to join in any solutions that may be proposed.

Therefore, first of all I wish to analyse the basic theory upon which we are being expected to support by contributing a portion of our wealth and prosperity.

This analysis is a strictly scientific one and should not be dismissed.

Secondly, as an economist, I wish to comment on what I see ahead of us in terms of economics - should we follow this road of giving up our life style and prosperity - the infrastructure of which has been bequeathed to us by the sacrifices of our fathers, both by their labours and commitment in two world wars.

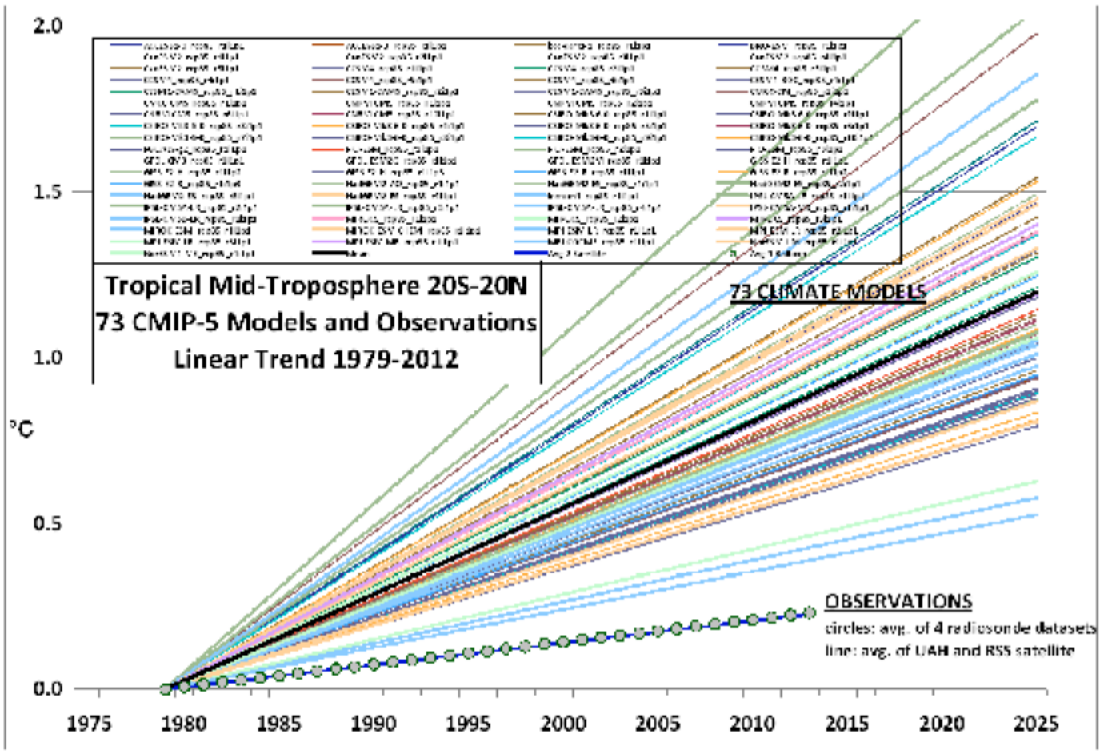
Global Warming. (I use the former term of that which is now termed "Climate Change").

The Anthropogenc Global Warming hypothesis fails scientifically on at least two counts.

First of all a hypothesis, in order to be considered valid, should be able to accurately predict outcomes which are consistent with empirical or physical measurements.

If the hypothesis cannot achieve this, normally in scientific circles, it would (and should) be abandoned.

Attached is a graph which compares the past predictions of a number of models/hypothesis with the observed satellite data.



Courtesy of http://www.drroyspencer.com/ website of June 4th, 2013 by Roy W. Spencer, Ph. D. Former NASA Scientist. Sources of models and observations converted to linear trend for comparison annotated on graph.

It is clear that the hypothesis as illustrated by these models do not reflect the observations. Therefore under normal scientific criteria, so far (after more than 30 years), the "CO2 causes Global Warming" hypothesis fails.

However, there is no doubt that the globe has warmed some. But there is no evidence that this climate change is anything out of the ordinary.

In order to show that his current warming is unusual AND caused by carbon dioxide, one will need to show that previous warmings such as the Medieval Warm Period, (whose higher temperatures are not only recorded in proxy data but also in written history and occurred at a time when no CO2 emissions, or other targeted man made gases, were being produced by man), are somehow different from the current warming (such as it is).

I have to say to you that I have found no such papers in the scientific literature that attempt to show this.

Some say the Medieval Warm Period and other warmings were local not global. There is however a volume of very good research that suggests otherwise.

We even have scientific data strongly suggesting the Medieval Warm Period also reached New Zealand. I cite

GLACIAL GEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE FOR THE MEDIEVAL
WARM PERIOD
JEAN M. GROVE
Girton College, Cambridge, U.K.
and
ROY SWITSUR
Wolfson College, Cambridge, U.K.

And

Evidence for a 'Medieval Warm Period' in a 1,100 year tree-ring
reconstruction of past austral summer temperatures in New Zealand
Edward R. Cook
Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, Palisades, NY, USA
Jonathan G. Palmer
Palaeocology Centre, Queens University, Belfast, Northern Ireland, UK
Rosanne D. D'Arrigo
Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, Palisades, NY, USA

Also the finding of a Danish Farm in Greenland still imbedded in permafrost strongly suggests that the Medieval Warm Period, (which could not possibly be caused by any Anthropogenic CO2 or other targeted man made gases), was somewhat warmer and more lengthy than the current warming.

Ref http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/s4/f2/dsk2/ftp04/mq22551.pdf

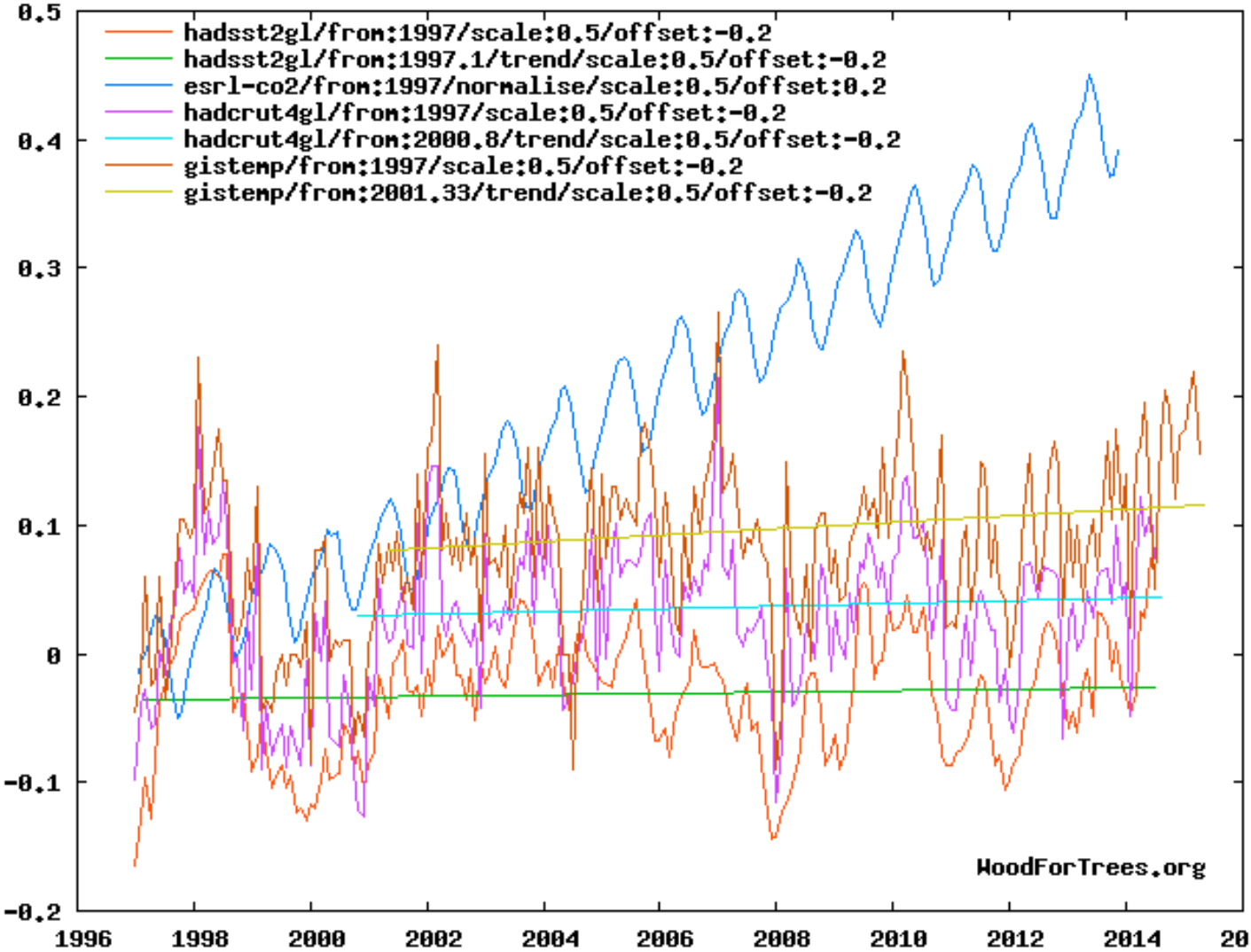
Therefore with no evidence that the current warming, such as it is, is different from the Medieval Warm Period and other warmings recorded in history and by proxies, the "CO2 causes Global Warming" hypothesis fails on at least two counts

Furthermore I would remind Her Majesties Government that in spite of the steady increase in atmospheric CO2, no significant Global Warming has been detected this century. In fact by some of the best empirical measurements available, none since 1998 to the present.

This has been acknowledged by the IPCC

"Although the forcing uncertainties are substantial, there are no apparent incorrect or missing global-mean forcings in the CMIP5 models over the last 15 years that could explain the model–observations difference during the warming hiatus."

IPCC WGI Fifth Assessment Report Final Draft (7 June 2013) P.9-29 Paragraph 2.
http://www.climatechange2013.org/images/uploads/WGIAR5_WGI-12Doc2b_FinalDraft_Chapter09.pdf



Graph of regressions based on data from various temperature recording agencies.

Above I have explained the scientific deficiencies of the "CO2 causes Global Warming" Hypothesis.

It is however quite true that the proportion of atmospheric CO2 continues to grow being as we speak, some 400 parts per million. (0.04%).

Given that CO2 seems unlikely to endanger us by heating up the atmosphere significantly, will this trend endanger life on earth? Is Carbon Dioxide poisonous?

Here are some facts which will ease these concerns.

It appears that a concentration of about 1,000ppmv would be beneficial to life on earth, this being the concentration that Glass House growers prefer.
http://api.ning.com/files/X-APctmkiwvgEI5fT6iiGjWFvKNX*cWuzeO4qmDVbgA_/GreenhousesCarbonDioxideInGreenhouses.pdf

Our exhaled breath is about 4500ppmv
http://www.biotopics.co.uk/humans/inhaledexhaled.html

Up to 5000ppmv is acceptable for work places.
(American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists.).

Up to 3000ppmv is acceptable for residences
(Canadian exposure guideline for residential buildings)"

Medical oxygen has between 10,000 ppmv and 20,000 ppmv in it.
http://www.bocsds.com/uk/sds/medical/10_carbondioxide_oxygen.pdf

http://www.bocsds.com/uk/sds/medical/10_carbondioxide_oxygen.pdf
(Look at datasheets under "O")

Currently our atmosphere has about 400 ppmv in it.

Furthermore, some scientists credit the extra CO2 in our atmosphere as the reason for our current increased food production.
http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/02/090209205202.htm

In other words, CO2 is plant food. So important is CO2 that at approximately 180 ppmv all life on earth would cease.

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.*

I do not agree with any of the above statements.

1b. What is most important to you?

What is most important to me is the attaining of a reasonable life style, good health, prosperity and political and social freedom for all people on this planet, especially those who live in the country of New Zealand and more especially my children and their descendants.

This somewhat perplexing movement to decrease CO2 will most certainly threaten the above things!

New Zealand may be a well resourced country, but as you mention in the discussion document, it is very difficult to find ways of reducing CO2 emissions and other targeted man made gases as much of our energy production is of the non CO2 producing type. Further more New Zealand with its small population can only at best make a minuscule contribution to world production of "Greenhouse Gases".

But should we bother to ruin the New Zealand life style and disrupt our society for the worse for reason of an unproven hypothesis and empirical evidence that 1. No global warming actually exists at the moment, and 2. That it is infinitely more likely that any climate change is natural, has happened before and is not caused by our actions?

Worst of all we, even under the current theories, can have no measurable effect on world CO2 emissions.

New Zealand contributes 0.2% of World Greenhouse emissions (Wikipedia 2010).
If we were wiped off the face of the earth and assuming that the calculations of the IPCC are correct, (which as there is no proven global warming, they are not), the contribution of CO2 reduction and lessening of global temperatures would be un-measurable.
Any contribution by New Zealand can only be posturing and therefore futile.

A fair contribution from New Zealand would be to follow Canada and other countries including Australia
New Zealand should demonstrate real leadership and repudiate the global warming theory as it stands.
At worst, take a wait and see attitude and as we are anxious to be world leaders in all other endeavours, we should become a world leader in clear and reasonable thinking.

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?

Academic papers are cautious about the cost of reducing greenhouse gases to below 1990 levels. Especially Stern whose treatise is somewhat lacking in substance.
However I can outline the scenario in New Zealand should we try to reduce greenhouse gases from 50 Million tonnes (2012) to less than 25 million tonnes 1990
http://www.stats.govt.nz/

Almost the only target for reductions in New Zealand is the reduction of the use of fossil fuels.)It would be doubly foolish economically to threaten directly our rural sector in any way).

These fuels are used throughout our modest industrial sector, our larger rural sector and our transport sector. Therefore according to the above statistics we need to cut or substitute energy use for something like half of our economy.
In other words, substitute coal and oil with what? Electricity? Already the balance of our electricity is supplied by thermal stations – we have run out of Hydro and Geo Thermal sites. That rules out electric cars and transport as well.

Gas?

Gas only emits roughly 12% less CO2 than Petrol and roughly 14% less than Diesel.
(http://www.eia.gov/tools/faqs/faq.cfm?id=73&t=11)

This can only mean that transport would need to be curtailed.

The demand for transport is especially high in New Zealand because of the distances between manufacture and market here.

Curtail or raise the price of transport in order to discourage use will affect consumers of food, building products and other essentials. Especially it will affect the rural sector who produce this food. Without much more analysis, it is easy to see the price of food rocketing should this sector be touched.

Biofuel is counter productive as it largely competes with land needed for food production.

The literature on the costs of complying with Kyoto are vague and unhelpful. Although it is indeed difficult to calculate costs for each household in this situation, it takes but half and eye to see that, at least in our case, the cost would be enormous.
Economies are fragile things. Interfere with critical sectors such as transport is likely to not only to cost the NZ public dearly in the pocket, but will destroy jobs and depress the economy.

One should recall the Great Depression of the 1930's where an unemployment rate of only 30% caused extreme hardship and starvation for many.
There will be no Keynesian nor a monatarist solution to repair the damage in this circumstance.

The answer to the question: "*How will our contribution affect New Zealanders?"* Is therefore

"Very Badly"

As an economist, I caution Her Majesties Government in appropriating any further tax payers resources for such a purpose. It would be futile and regressive economically to even think that subsidies from tax payers funds would counter the above situation. Neither would be "borrowing from the Reserve Bank, Quantitative Easing, creating credit or simply printing currency. These are all the same process with different names.

New Zealand may be a rich country, but we are regularly reminded that we already have significant issues with child poverty and poor education outcomes. For "Child Poverty" also read "Parental Poverty".

Any increase in tax appropriations or governmental increases imposed on essentials for such a foolish purpose will in absolute certainty affect these people first and more severely.

An increase in taxes or living expenses - especially where these resources will not be returned to the people, will most certainly result in an increase in unemployment mainly for the New Zealand citizens who can least afford it.

If Her Majesties Government seeks to alleviate this projected suffering by subsidising these hardest hit people from the public purse, I warn you that this will make matters worse, as an increase in taxes, needed to fund this, will simply cause more unemployment and more suffering. Subsidies of expensive "Green" technology will have exactly the same effect.

Politicians often refer to John Maynard Keynes who advocated that government spending will increase wealth in an economy. This is only half the truth, and works only in certain economic circumstances such as found in the 1930's. Those of us who remember the Vietnam War where the US Government sought to finance the conflict by "Printing Money' in line with Keynes, will also remember the resultant world monetary inflation and the continuing problems it caused. There is no way that government spending on subsidies will enrich or maintain the status quo in our society.
Milton Friedman https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_g_Y0U1QcI
Dr Michael Basset http://www.michaelbassett.co.nz/articles.htm

What level of cost is appropriate for New Zealand to reduce it greenhouse gas emissions?

For example, what do you think would be a reasonable impact on annual household consumption?

If the "CO2 causes Global Warming" hypothesis us invalid, there is no case for imposing any impact on any household.
As mentioned above, any impact will disadvantage the lower income sector and tend to slide the New Zealand economy into a decline.

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

If the "CO2 causes Global Warming" hypothesis is invalid, there is no case for imposing any impact on any household. A governments job is to allow the people to prosper. The proposed activities will do the opposite

The proposed appropriations and subsidies that are possibly thought to be appropriate, are exactly how a government should go about causing an economic slump and depression. These things should be avoided like the plague.

How will our contribution affect New Zealanders?

What level of cost is appropriate for New Zealand to reduce it greenhouse gas emissions?
For example, what do you think would be a reasonable impact on annual household consumption?

If the "CO2 causes Global Warming" hypothesis is invalid, there is no case for imposing any impact on any household.

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?

I believe that the tenure of the IPCC is limited and near its end. As the "hiatus" in global warming reaches its 20th year, it is probably that the IPCC and possibly the United Nations may suffer a serious loss of face over this. One should also view other United Nation protocols such as Agenda 21 with cynicism.

He Majesties Government should also consider the political reaction from the general population, should it become apparent that their already fading prosperity has been jeopardised by the cost of meeting any UNFCC targets.

Summary

How should New Zealand take into account the future uncertanties of technologies and costs when setting its target?

There is nothing wrong with the idea of “new technologies”. However traditionally governments are poor at “picking winners”. Her Majesties government should work to remove any administrative and bureaucratic obstacles from the development of such technologies but should refrain from using tax payers funds to encourage projects that look encouraging.

Other comments

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

I am very aware that Her Majesties Government is subject to overseas pressures in regard of the Kyoto/emissions issue.

I do understand that the government, in the current environment may wish not to “rock the boat” at present.

It is at least important to refrain from becoming a “leader” in this situation.

A good strategy would be to “wait” to see if global warming will be actually empirically detected in the future.

Another strategy would be to side closely with our brothers in Australia who at this time are busy unravelling a similar tangle.

Ultimately New Zealand may have international pressure put upon it to comply. However we are part of the Asian Sphere now.

China is unlikely to take much notice of any sanctions and will be eager to trade with us as would most of the rest of Asia.

Sanctions may affect our economy to a minor degree, but very much less than the disastrous damage that would be caused by complying with the UNFCCC.

Finally, it is important to record that I, and most people like me, are anxious to have the general environment cared for in a proper way and with people to be able to co-exist. This is important for us all.