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

Copy of your submission

Contact information

Name   Keith Ballard
Organisation (if applicable)
Address
Telephone
Email

Objectives for the contribution

Do you agree with these objectives for our contribution?  No

1b. What is most important to you?
The government must stop saying that NZ emissions are small and make little difference.
This claim is intended to persuade people that action is not needed.
The government should provide accurate information that NZ emissions per head are very high.
In that case the government should identify climate change as a threat to all of our lives that needs action now.
The words ‘fair’ and ‘ambitious’ are meaningless in this context.

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?
The nature of our emissions, in particular agriculture, cannot be used as an excuse for limited action.
If it is difficult to act on farming emissions, then greater action must be taken in other areas, such as transport,
while ways of acting on farming issues are worked out.
The work of economist Lord Stern has shown clearly that the economic cost of not acting on climate change will be catastrophic.
The claim that the economy must be maintained in its present form must not be used as a basis for limiting action on climate change.
It is the idea of ‘growth’ that is driving climate change.
We must work with the alternative idea of a planet with finite resources and a planet that cannot sustain human life
when the it heats beyond present levels.
The idea of a ‘fair’ contribution is meaningless in a context where, as James Hanson says, the lives of our children and grandchildren are under grave threat.

How will our contribution affect New Zealanders?

3. What level of cost is appropriate for New Zealand to reduce it’s greenhouse gas emissions? For example, what would be a reasonable reduction in annual household consumption?
The idea of a level of ‘cost’ is misleading.
It implies that we can continue to live and consume as we are without a ‘cost’.
The ‘cost’ of not taking severe action will be life threatening.
So our actions will affect how we live now, but effective action will ensure that our children can live.
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?
The action needed must be directed by science.
The ‘cost’ must be managed by government in terms of planned changes to how New Zealanders think about their responsibilities for themselves and future generations.
As we look after ourselves in radically changing our emissions then we will also be looking after all other humans.

Summary

5. How should New Zealand take into account the future uncertainties of technologies and costs when setting its target?
Future uncertainties about technology are not especially important. There is much evidence and examples (for example Naomi Kleins work) of what actions are known to be effective and what can be done.
Constant reference to ‘cost’ is meant to cause people to be concerned with immediate effects on themselves. This hides the greater cost of how our lives will be affected by climate change as the environment becomes dangerous, food and water supplies are threatened and climate refugees search for a place to live.

Other comments

6. Is there any further information you wish the Government to consider? Please explain.
I would urge the government to accept that climate change is real and that it presents an immediate threat to humanity. We have a moral responsibility to act in a meaningful way.