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

Copy of your submission

Contact information

Name   Lee Barry
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 objectives do not give sufficient consideration or weight to the future costs of climate change impacts on the economy or society, or to the benefits and opportunities from reducing our emissions.

The most important consideration for me is a TRULY fair and ambitious contribution, that embraces the inevitable need to set our emission on a downward path (not just being "seen as" fair and ambitious, or a smokescreen for rising emissions through rising offsets). A true low carbon plan is the right and smart thing to do and will enable New Zealand to stand up for our values internationally, signal our commitment to solving a dire international problem, and make the most of our natural benefits to compete with other countries and markets in the low-carbon race.

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?
Every country has different challenges in meeting emissions targets - for example our very low population is a distinct advantage over other countries with large and rapidly growing populations. The level of our target should be equitable with other ambitious developed countries and should be ambitious enough to drive the systemic, economic change required by all world economies to activate and reward low carbon development. In other words, our present economic mix - if it is a high carbon mix - should not "mean" anything for the level of our target; rather the level of our target (being ambitious and meaningful) should "mean" that the nature of our emissions and economy is seen as way out of date and be prompted to change, in line with a comprehensive low carbon development plan
A 40% emissions reduction target is realistic.

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?
The "cost"of reducing emissions is irrelevant unless it is matched by a comprehensive assessment of the "cost" of the impacts from climate change or the benefits from moving to a lower carbon economy. This question is entirely misleading in its one-sided assumption that the only outcome of emissions reduction can be cost to the household. It also appears to assume that the "cost" of emissions reductions only comes from buying credits, not from any domestic emission reduction (for example increasing spend to reduce private vehicle use) which will also have considerable benefits (increased cycling and walking having health benefits).
Furthermore, even with the economic modeling used in your discussion document, New Zealand household income is still projected to increase from $73,000 per year today, to $83,200 per year in 2027 even with a 40% emissions reduction target. But is has been presented in a misleading way to mask this overall positive impact on income, despite even large emissions reductions.

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?
Firstly, these are only SOME of the many opportunities for New Zealand to reduce our emissions and are again misleading due to what is omitted: capping or reducing herd size in the dairy industry and focusing on value-added products instead to ensure no additional - and ideally a reduction in - methane emissions, for example. The most immediate opportunities for New Zealand are around reducing emissions from transport - both domestic and freight - through a combination of better vehicle fuel economy standards, more investment into domestic biofuels, increased rail use for freight and passengers, increased public transport in general, enabling electric vehicle infrastructure amongst other levers and tools.

Summary

5. How should New Zealand take into account the future uncertainties of technologies and costs when setting its target?
In setting our target, New Zealand should take into account that low carbon technology will certainly advance, and at an exponential rate. We could be part of the new low carbon technology wave if developers and investors saw New Zealand as a country committed to this path.
In terms of costs, in setting our target, New Zealand should take into account that the costs of initiating and progressing a lower carbon economy (either through offsets and domestic action) will only increase over time - if we don't start now, it will certainly get more and more and more expensive in the future. Why wait? - it will only cost the taxpayer more. This fact has been carefully concealed in your consultation.

Other comments

6. Is there any further information you wish the Government to consider? Please explain.
Inaction is the easiest option. It is also shortsighted, and weak. In setting a small and meaningless emissions reduction target, New Zealand is missing a huge opportunity to signal we are serious in playing our part to protect global security. Send all the Security Council reps, and all the troops to war you like, without serious action to address climate change the world is seriously at risk from instability and currently New Zealand is doing nothing to help.
I want a New Zealand that plays its part and offers to "be part of the club" which takes action on climate change very seriously, as a global security issue. This club puts aside short-term parochial economic inconveniences and commits to joining others in making small sacrifices so that the global economy will be stable, productive and will sustain the core functions of our planetary system.
I want the government to set in place ambitious policies to reduce emissions in New Zealand, while sending a signal to the world that we are playing our part. I want the government to make it cheaper to buy a low emissions car, more convenient to travel by public transport and encourage companies to reduce pollution. I want to be proud of my country and what it is doing to tackle the biggest issue of our time.
Please revise this target to a meaningful one - 40% below 1990 level - I am prepared to take the small hit on my future income ($44 a week more for a 40% reduction than a 5% reduction!? Good value, I reckon) because I know there will be huge costs of not acting, and huge benefits of taking action. Thank you.
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