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

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Objectives for the contribution

Do you agree with these objectives for our contribution?   No

1b. What is most important to you?

Only objective 2 "costs and impacts on society are managed appropriately" is relevant to considering proposed emission controls. And then only insofar as those controls and the costs they impose would necessarily adversely impact the poorest amongst New Zealand's population. The imposition of emission controls/limits/costs will not improve social or financial outcomes for our citizens. Rather, it will impose an unnecessary burden on us in terms of both the availability and the cost of reliable energy and reduce social prosperity. Objective 2 is the primary reason that New Zealand should avoid any unilateral, binding emission goals or targets.

Objective 1 "it is seen as a fair and ambitious contribution – both by international and domestic audiences" is a political statement which I have addressed in part 4, paragraph 5 below. It is not relevant to this discussion except insofar as it restricts NZ from access to international markets and security.

Objective 3 "it must guide New Zealand over the long term in the global transition to a low emissions world" is a completely ridiculous statement. It suggests that the pursuit of an emission reduction strategy should be the primary overarching consideration of all future decisions made in NZ. To make this objective a valid proposition it would be necessary to establish that the emissions of CO2 is the primary driver behind financial, social and spiritual prosperity. CO2 is a harmless trace gas. It is relatively scarce in historical terms and it is vital to supporting all life. It is not a significant greenhouse gas and is not in any way 'controlling' our countries development.

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?

New Zealand will be more competitive economically in the absence of any restrictions on CO2 emissions. As agricultural production (particularly dairy, forestry and meat) features significantly in the medium to long term economic success of New Zealand, our nation would benefit considerably from an increase in atmospheric CO2. Also, the increase in biodiversity which is attributable to CO2 would improve income from eco-tourism. Analysis of available data supports the premise that CO2 is a beneficial by-product of economic activity. Accordingly, we should not attempt to limit CO2 production in any manner whatsoever.

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?

As noted in 2. above, reduction of CO2 emissions is not necessary and would be detrimental economically. This
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apples to both commercial and private activities. There is no clear correlation as to how greenhouse gasses may impact on future global temperature or other natural climate challenges. However, there is a strong correlation between CO2 emissions and prosperity. Likewise, the relative prosperity of any community is closely linked to that groups subsequent ability to withstand, overcome and recover from dangerous climate events such as storms, floods and drought. Any financial burden imposed upon NZ households would reduce their versatility and put them at greater risk of harm from climate changes (natural or otherwise).

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?
   1) The imposition of emission controls would not reduce costs to businesses and households; since energy is a measurement of work (output), increased energy supply (i.e.: increased production) is required to increase output and thereby improve people’s health, wealth and opportunities.

   2) Our best opportunities to increase supply lie in expansion of our hydroelectric capacity and exploitation of hydrocarbon energy. This increased energy production would necessarily reduce cost and assist investment in R&D of new technologies.

   3) Since carbon is the second most common element in humans and is the basis of the chemical structure of life, I would suggest we avoid transition to a low-carbon economy. I think the document has incorrectly conflated carbon and CO2. They are significantly different. Regardless, my proposition in (2) above related to increasing energy supply via hydro and petrochemical development would better provide energy security. In the absence of any emission regulations NZ would avoid the threat of high future carbon (sic) prices.

   4) For thirty years climate scientists have failed to narrow the estimates of climate sensitivity, nor produce models that work on decadal, short term, global, or continental scales. There is no link between health and global greenhouse gas levels, with water vapour (the dominant greenhouse gas). Likewise, any link between greenhouse gas emissions and social well-being, erosion control and water quality would be tenuous at best. These matters are completely irrelevant to this discussion.

   5) Remaining ‘on side’ with the UN, UNFCC and its supporting nations in order to avoid restriction of NZ products on the global market is probably the only valid argument for any emission control target. As such our proposed targets and goals should be only sufficient to placate these groups and maintain necessary diplomatic and financial access to their markets. The target should be non-binding, adjustable and not subject to any international monitoring nor interventions. Alternatively however, China, India and other ‘developing’ nations have continued to enjoy increase energy production (along with the associated increased CO2 emissions) with no international sanction. They show little interest in any emission reductions in the near to median future; it may be wiser for NZ to align its financial and political support behind these growing nations and rely upon their expanding markets for future growth.

Summary

5. How should New Zealand take into account the future uncertainties of technologies and costs when setting its target?
   Clearly, there are significant uncertainties; After decades of investigation and 5 massive reports the IPCC continues to fail to establish an accurate climate sensitivity value. The numerous models upon which their human-caused global warming hypotheses is based are failing to account for the current 18 year pause in global temperature. They do not accurately measure ocean temperatures, sea-ice volumes or atmospheric moisture content. The continued increase in atmospheric CO2 does not correlate in any way with the measured lack of warming. On all measurements to date AGW the hypotheses has failed.

Climate change is not new and has always been a fact of this planets existence. We can be certain that the climate
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will change again as it has in the past. We can also be certain the changes will occur in the future regardless of our CO2 emissions. We cannot accurately predict the time, place or nature of these changes. Likewise, we cannot predict the nature or utility of future energy production technology. Knowing that prosperity and opportunity increases human resilience and innovation, we should take every action possible to increase our countries energy production. This will ensure that our citizens are best positioned to avoid or mitigate climate hazards which do arise and also take advantage of new technological developments.

Other comments

6. Is there any further information you wish the Government to consider? Please explain. There is significant data and analysis available regarding all the subjects relevant to this discussion (mortality, prosperity, climate sensitivity, IPCC, extreme weather, CMIP5 climate models, satellite and terrestrial temperature datasets, sea ice and sea level datasets etc). On balance, none of the available scientific literature or data suggests that Anthropogenic Global Warming or Man-made Climate Change is a significant risk. This abundance of contrary information should direct the discussion as to New Zealand's Climate Change Target.