

# Your submission to Zero Carbon Bill

Benjamin Thomas Hay-Smith

## Reference no: 44

Submitter Type: Individual

### Clause

1. What process should the Government use to set a new emissions reduction target in legislation?

### Position

The Government sets a 2050 target in legislation now

### Notes

Although the last option is safer, I think it's a bit too late for a conservative approach to reaching net zero emissions. Setting a clear and simple goal of net zero by 2050 will signal to all businesses and individuals that it is time to begin the transition to an economy with minimal emissions.

### Clause

2. If the Government sets a 2050 target now, which is the best target for New Zealand?

### Position

Net Zero Long-Lived Gases and Stabilised Short-Lived Gases - Long-lived gases to net zero by 2050 while also stabilising short-lived gases

### Notes

Although it would be great to have net zero emissions for CO<sub>2</sub>, Methane, and every type of greenhouse gas we emit by 2050, it could be best to set a more realistic goal. Considering that short lived gases spend little time in the atmosphere compared to gases like CO<sub>2</sub>, it makes sense to bring them down to a stable level while focusing on the one that will actually cause us significant problems in the long term (CO<sub>2</sub>).

### Clause

3. How should New Zealand meet its targets?

### Position

Domestic emissions reductions only (including from new forest planting)

### Notes

While it would be easier to include overseas forms of carbon offsetting, the incident in Ukraine a few years ago proved that this is probably not a great idea. Additionally, by keeping our emission reductions domestic, we can more easily keep track of the quality and quantity of work being done. It will also have the additional effect of providing our private sector with a chance to build some real expertise in this area, that can then be exported as information and highly skilled services to the rest of the world.

### Clause

4. Should the Zero Carbon Bill allow the 2050 target to be revised if circumstances change?

### Position

Yes

### Notes

There should be the ability to revise the target in the intervening years so long as it is proven that the change will result in a net benefit to the original goal of reducing our emissions. I.E. We discover in a few years time that short lived gases are more dangerous than originally assumed, and want to amend the 2050 target to include short lived gases as well.

### Clause

5. The Government proposes that three emissions budgets of five years each (i.e. covering the next 15 years) be in place at any given time. Do you agree with this proposal?

### Notes

I dislike the idea of standardising the approach to lowering our emissions too much, as it may overly restrict the ability of the private sector to respond and adapt to the changing environment. Nevertheless, if this is the simplest way to ensure adequate progress towards the target, then I can agree that it is acceptable.

### Clause

6. Should the Government be able to alter the last emissions budget (i.e. furthest into the future)?

### Notes

Once again, there should be some ability to modify the target if a change does occur in the meantime - but I would hesitate to allow the issue to become more politicised than it needs to be. Allowing governments to fiddle with the parameters of the emissions budgets would only end in needless conflict within Parliament and on the campaign trail about how best to tackle lowering our emissions. It would certainly be preferable to leave any ability to amend the emissions budgets to a non-partisan group who cannot

use it to score political points.

**Clause**

9. Should the Zero Carbon Bill require Governments to set out plans within a certain timeframe to achieve the emissions budgets?

**Position**

Yes

**Notes**

Extremely specific plans are unnecessary, but some evidence that they are making progress in the right direction is required to let the general public know they are doing their job correctly. If not, it is our right to hold them to account for their failure.

**Clause**

10. What are the most important issues for the Government to consider in setting plans to meet budgets? For example, who do we need to work with, what else needs to be considered?

**Notes**

I'd say that making it extremely clear to the private sector what is expected of them is paramount. We do not want to unnecessarily reduce business confidence, and a clear cut plan to meet the emissions budgets will allow businesses plenty of time to adapt to the changes.

**Clause**

11. The Government has proposed that the Climate Change Commission advises on and monitors New Zealand's progress towards its goals. Do you agree with these functions? See p42 Our Climate Your Say

**Position**

Yes

**Notes**

An independent organisation should certainly be able to provide advice and hold to account the Government in their goal of reducing emissions.

**Clause**

12. What role do you think the Climate Change Commission should have in relation to the New Zealand Emissions Trading Scheme (NZ ETS)?

**Position**

Makes decisions itself in respect of the number of units available in the NZ ETS

**Notes**

I would prefer that the goal of net zero emissions by 2050 be as de-politicised as possible, and that the administration of this goal be conducted by professional scientists rather than professional politicians.

**Clause**

13. The Government has proposed that Climate Change Commissioners need to have a range of essential and desirable expertise. Do you agree with the proposed expertise? See p45 Our Climate Your Say

**Position**

Yes

**Notes**

**Clause**

14. Do you think the Zero Carbon Bill should cover adapting to climate change?

**Position**

Yes

**Notes**

**Clause**

16. Should we explore setting up a targeted adaptation reporting power that could see some organisations share information on their exposure to climate change risks?

**Position**

Yes

**Notes**

**Clause**

Do you have any other comments you'd like to make?

**Notes**

At the end of the day, I think it's essential that we take some responsibility as a nation for our emissions. Reaching the target of net zero emissions by 2050 is an important part of this process, and it seems obvious to me that our progress on this issue should be as removed from politics as possible. The more we allow politicians to discuss the nature and threat of climate change and its associated problems, the less actual work is being done to address them. In the perfect world, reaching our target of net zero

emissions by 2050 would be a 'set and forget' matter. At least then people would be able to rest easy knowing that real action is being taken, by professionals, to guide our country into a future where we still have a habitable planet for our children and grandchildren.