

Your submission to Zero Carbon Bill

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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 goal to reach net zero emissions by the second half of the century and the Climate Change Commission advises on the specific target for the Government to set later

Notes

Rather than specifying 2050 which will then be a date to work towards, and which I believe will be far too late in view of rapid climate change already occurring, it would be better to specify the earliest conceivable date that a particular task should and could be completed, especially if there are no significant downsides to achieving a goal.

Clause

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

Position

Net Zero Emissions - Net zero emissions across all greenhouse gases by 2050

Notes

The 2050 target was adopted to get international acceptance, but in practice if we are serious about taking action the 2050 date should be replaced by a phrase such as "as soon as at all possible".

Clause

3. How should New Zealand meet its targets?

Position

Domestic emissions reductions only (including from new forest planting)

Notes

The Zero Carbon Bill should be about our emissions. International carbon units are a convenient way of dodging the issue however strong environmental safeguards may be. We must take responsibility for our own emissions.

Clause

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

Position

Yes

Notes

Of course bringing the date forward would obviously be wise since since warming appears to be increasing dangerously. So the Bill should allow for revising the date to an earlier time.

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?

Position

Yes

Notes

Clause

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

Position

Yes - each incoming Government should have the option to review the third budget in the sequence

Notes

Clause

7. Should the Government have the ability to review and adjust the second emissions budget within a specific range under exceptional circumstances? See p36 Our Climate Your Say

Position

Yes

Notes

But only if the opposition in parliament agrees.

Clause

8. Do you agree with the considerations we propose that the Government and the Climate Change Commission take into account when advising on and setting budgets? See p44 Our Climate Your Say

Position

Yes

Notes

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

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

The main issue is one of time. We may already be too late to prevent very severe warming, plus really damaging weather, which will prevent our ability to feed ourselves.

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

Prefer advisory role with built in mechanism to hold govt to account

Clause

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

Notes

The emissions trading scheme has not worked. I would prefer to see a straightforward carbon tax with as few exemptions as possible.

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

Yes , of course, although we would prefer that very timely action precludes the need to adapt fast.

Clause

15. The Government has proposed a number of new functions to help us adapt to climate change. Do you agree with the proposed functions? See p47 Our Climate Your Say

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

This would apply for shareholders investing in fossil fuel companies when the world is turning towards renewable energy.

Clause

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

Notes

Submission for the Zero Carbon Act Starting with the low hanging fruit is a good way to make rapid progress towards the Zero Carbon Goal. Much carbon entering the atmosphere as CO2 comes from fossil fuels used by petrol and diesel fueled vehicles for transport services in our economy. But now, with the arrival of electric vehicles that are already practical substitutes for transport of all types, a transition which has already started, can be accelerated by such a Zero Carbon Act and so will dramatically reduce fossil carbon entering our atmosphere. I would like to suggest that a complete transition to an all-electric economy could be achieved in say ten years with appropriate Government Aid and Encouragement. Should such a transition be successful, other ongoing benefits to our society would be the elimination of N2O, a long-lived greenhouse gas from exhaust pipes, along with smoke and other PM 2.5 particles believed to be causing the ill health and early deaths of the public at large. Indeed, there would be no exhaust pipes and NZ's contribution to global warming would be greatly and rapidly reduced. The need for speedy action can be seen all around the world, not just in NZ. The trajectory of global temperature curves, CO2 and Methane concentrations, all are accelerating upwards, an ice-free Arctic is a real possibility even next Arctic Summer, and Antarctic ice is dwindling. Greenland is losing ice and sea level rise is increasing. Why would we wait to act? In the background the very real possibility of positive feed backs such as where warming destabilises massive stores of Arctic methane clathrates to release methane, which in turn reinforces the warming rate to release yet more methane in an accelerating self-perpetuating reaction. There is the potential for very rapid and massive increases in the current warming being seen. A further benefit that would accrue from a rapid transition to all- electric transport comes from the fact that if Solar Energy is used to replace the energy formally supplied by burning fossil fuels for transport purposes, then the costs of that energy and quantity of that energy is significantly less than the costs of those previously used fuels. Here it is assumed that solar energy would be generated in a distributed manner wherever that energy is being used to charge electric vehicles, usually in garages attached to domestic dwellings or business enterprises. (See Vector for the feasibility of using Distributed Generators without causing grid disruption). This leads to an estimate on a per household level of benefit from not buying petrol and diesel of \$2,951 and \$5,348 per annum respectively. Once installed and paid for the solar panels will continue to deliver power for up to at least 30 years. Payback times are 2.58 years and 5.32 years respectively. In total an additional 48 Billion dollars would circulate in our economy annually, and this figure does not include the costs of ill health and early death, and accelerating climate change avoided. I would like to share the spreadsheet that I created for interested parties to understand how the benefits mentioned above were calculated. Of course, the results depend on current costs and prices that can change in the future, but these are inputs that can be changed on the spreadsheet at any time to reveal new results. I was unsuccessful in attaching a copy to the first submission I attempted, so will send a working copy to anybody making a request by email to me at