Your submission to Zero Carbon Bill

Kate Scanlen

Reference no: 164

Submitter Type: Individual

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<tr>
<th>Clause</th>
<th>1. What process should the Government use to set a new emissions reduction target in legislation?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>The Government sets a 2050 target in legislation now</td>
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<td>Notes</td>
<td>The longer NZ goes without a definite target, the less likely definitive steps will be taken to reach it. This goal needs to be ambitious (net zero by 2050 is not just ambitious - science has made it clear this is NECESSARY to contain the destruction climate change can cause) and constantly worked towards from now on. The Climate Change Commission can and should play an important part in suggestion interim targets to step up to the main target, similar to the UK model, so our economy can gradually adjust to the necessary changes. Things are not going to happen overnight but we really need to start acting now.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Clause</th>
<th>2. If the Government sets a 2050 target now, which is the best target for New Zealand?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Net Zero Emissions - Net zero emissions across all greenhouse gases by 2050</td>
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<td>Notes</td>
<td>Net zero emissions is important because so many of our emissions (which are very high per capita) come from methane, not carbon dioxide. We are not addressing the full extent of the problem if we only focus on carbon. This will require a huge change to the agricultural industry. Quite frankly, converting the economy to a more tertiary sector dominated service economy will be better for New Zealand in the long run. Another alternative is to invest far more into agricultural innovation so we can become a global leader and teacher in green agricultural practices. This will also have profound global effects and will mean we are not putting the burden of emissions on developing regions which might practice dirtier agriculture than we are.</td>
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<th>Clause</th>
<th>3. How should New Zealand meet its targets?</th>
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<td>Position</td>
<td>Domestic emissions reductions only (including from new forest planting)</td>
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<td>Notes</td>
<td>The carbon trading system has raised the eyebrows of environmentalists since its implementation. It is found to be fairly exploitative and merely shifts the burden around, often to countries least equipped at dealing with the repercussions. A big problem with the UK model is its reliance on international credits, which has justified projects like fracking and airport expansion. Focus only on domestic emissions will force New Zealand to be more responsible in its emissions and create greater incentive on green innovation. This would not be a hindrance to the economy - it is becoming very apparent this is where the global economy is heading anyway.</td>
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<th>Clause</th>
<th>4. Should the Zero Carbon Bill allow the 2050 target to be revised if circumstances change?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Notes</td>
<td>Climate change science is obviously plagued with uncertainty. A degree of flexibility is important in case conditions get better or worse. At this stage, it only seems likely things will be getting worse and so this should be accounted for. There should be protections in place to protect governments from making the target weaker unless there is very good reason for this, such as the requirement for a super-majority in parliament.</td>
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<th>Clause</th>
<th>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?</th>
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<td>Position</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Notes</td>
<td>This model has so far proven successful in the UK because it allows industries to transition to what is needed slowly and effectively. It also creates a degree of flexibility alongside this certainty in case circumstances change in the future. What needs to be certain, however, is that these targets can be achieved realistically, and what should happen if they are not achieved. If there is no incentive for reaching them, how can we ensure they will be met? Something must make these mandatory instead of visionary or nothing will</td>
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end up happening.

### Clause 6
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**
It makes sense to allow the government some room to change but obviously protections should be put in place. The Climate Change Commission should potentially have more influence here than the UK model - for example, preventing a change they feel would be contrary to global climate change goals. This is obviously radical but climate change is a wicked problem that requires a lot of selfless acts from a lot of developed nations like NZ. Naturally, governments may not feel like a goal is in their best interest. Something must act as a safeguard for the global best interest, and the Commission is an obvious contender to this.

### Clause 7
7. Should the Government have the ability to review and adjust the second emissions budget within a specific range under exceptional circumstances?

**Position**
No

**Notes**

### Clause 8
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?

**Position**
Yes

**Notes**
But more considerations on vulnerable people within society as well as current land uses and their potential for short-term or long-term change. For example, lots of technology for efficient housing exists but it is a very different challenge in retrofitting existing housing stocks to be just as efficient, and this is where most effort must be put in lowering emissions from housing.

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

**Position**
Yes

**Notes**
Absolutely a must. How else could a target feasibly by achieved? A more pertinent question is what to do if they are not put into place! We must ensure things get done.

### Clause 10
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**
As many people as possible must be considered, from all walks of life. The big emitters obviously are important - farmers must be big players but also shouldn’t use their influence to ensure the business as usual is followed. Their knowledge must be respected but also challenged to change. Transport is also obviously important, and that includes everyone who drives a car. Poorer people will be most affected from changing transport patterns and so must be included - a goal for transport for all must constantly be followed.
This will be most difficult in rural areas. The forestry industry, Department of Conservation and farmers are important players in considering tree stocks. It is just as important to maintain them as it is to plant them to ensure they become effective carbon sequesters. Iwi are also a major player in this realm and others and should have a lot of influence throughout the process of setting a budget. All perspectives are important but they must be considered against the ultimate carbon target - this ultimately needs to take precedence over all due to the huge impacts climate change will have in the future.

### Clause 11
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?

**Position**
Yes

**Notes**
I agree with all the advisory and monitoring functions of the CCC. I believe this could be expanded in thinking about strategies more cleverly - for example tackling both climate change mitigation and adaptation together, in one policy, which is starting to be examined overseas, as well as advising and considering local government responses as carefully as central government responses. Taking international actions into account and translating it into the NZ context would be a good strategy so we do not re-invent the wheel.
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 believe having an independent body making decisions about this will ensure the NZ ETS may actually make an impact. At present it is, quite frankly, doing almost nothing and that is likely highly influenced by politics. This is not good enough and we need to work out a new method. If this method does not work out, government should have power to take this role away from the CCC and put them in an advisory role.

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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**

Possible additions: Agricultural and transport technology and innovation; Pasifika interests; experts in international mitigation and adaptation policy.

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

**Position**

Yes

**Notes**

Either this act needs to cover it, a separate act needs to cover it, or greater address under the current Resource Management Act system. Either way, adaptation to climate change needs a lot more recognition in the legislature with more expert advice and protections for councils granted through it. It should be said that the name 'Zero Carbon Act' does create a focus on mitigation and therefore may create the risk of downplaying the importance of adaptation.

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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**

The risk assessment should take priority so councils know what needs addressing most. The Plan is an interesting idea and should hold statutory power if put into place. It should also work with councils closely in being made, as adaptation is largely relevant on the local scales where councils are experts and likely to implement whatever is proposed. A big issue today is that councils do not know what to do, or if they do take bold action, private individuals complain and potentially sue them. Occasionally this is successful and occasionally it is not, but this uncertainty has taken a toll! Councils need more knowledge and protection in writing their plans especially as climate change impacts may require more drastic adaptation measures as time goes on, like full abandonment of private property.

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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**

The more accessible data from all over the country, the better. The more guidance actors have, the better. When it comes to adaptation, knowledge is absolutely key. A centralised way of collecting and sharing this information is one of the best ideas considered by this bill.

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**Clause**

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

**Notes**

Climate change needs to be given priority in this country. It is not important that compared to other countries, our emissions are small. Per capita, our emissions are an embarrassment. We must act now. Climate change must be given priority in this country. Interests of industrial sectors are important. The economy is important. But climate change MUST be given priority. This requires immediate action. It also requires consistent, ongoing action. I am most concerned about the priority this Act will be given over time, as throughout history the interests of building the economy has always reigned. While the economy undoubtedly will still grow while prioritising climate change (and may even benefit), not everyone may see it this way. I am worried about how future governments will see it. I'm worried climate change will never be prioritised because it is so nebulous, and its effects are so hard to understand and pin upon a single phenomenon. Even today its effects are being felt, and people still deny climate change is the root as there is no definitive scientific way of doing this. This act needs priority within our government. Please consider entrenched something so important. The UK act that this bill is highly influenced by is so successful due to the bi-partisan support it has enjoyed over history.
We clearly don't have that yet. Therefore, entrenchment is the only protection this act may have over its lifetime. We must also consider incentives in ensuring action happens. The less discussed aspect of the UK Act is that the country is now struggling to keep up with the demands of its future targets. No one knows how they will be achieved and at present it is doubted they can be. No target has yet been failed to be met, but this may change soon. So how will we make sure the same won't happen here? I doubt a voluntary basis will be enough to create the change needed for the ambition currently proposed by the government.