

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 2050 target in legislation now

Notes

It is important to set a goal that can only be changed by going through a proper Parliamentary process including a Select Committee hearing

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

Although methane is characterised as a short lived gas, its half life is still more than a decade and according to many authorities methane has 25 times the greenhouse effect of carbon dioxide so its effects are substantial. Simply stabilising methane emissions won't have the effect we need as a country

Clause

3. How should New Zealand meet its targets?

Position

Domestic emissions reductions only (including from new forest planting)

Notes

The history of international carbon units is highly dubious. Most of them are not worth the paper they're printed on. I would rather we rely on our own efforts and not rely on other countries, systems for the legitimacy of our reductions

Clause

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

Position

Yes

Notes

The legislation needs to be very specific about under what circumstances the target can be revised and not just changed political circumstances

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 - the third emissions budget should be able to be changed but only when the subsequent budget is set

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

Yes but only under truly exceptional circumstances e.g. and earthquake in Wellington not just because Auckland hasn't got its act together with public transport etc. (for example)

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

Mine is a qualified agreement. In the past the economic circumstances argument has been overused to justify not taking a firm stance on nitrogen pollution (for example) in our waterways, environmental flows in rivers, not prosecuting farmers who are in contravention of their resource consents etc. Economic circumstances cant be used as a convenient reason (excuse) for doing less than is necessary especially when it is used as a way to protect vested interests.

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

It must have rigorous targets, clear accountabilities, regular reporting mechanisms.

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

Please take a whole of New Zealand Inc approach. We in Canterbury have seen, with the Canterbury Water Management Strategy, an approach that purported to take into account everyone's views and place ecological outcomes to the forefront be undermined by local zone committees being dominated by local exploitative land and water users to the detriment of other community voices. All voices must be given equal validity and not just the most organised and vocal.

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

I would favour the Climate Change Commission being Advisory with mechanisms to hold the Government to account. I don't support it having decision making powers as in a democracy this still needs to lie with Parliament. Its methods and mechanisms for reporting on and holding the Government to account probably require a new creature of Government with the independence of the Parliamentary Commissioner of the Environment and the specified, independent roles of the Reserve Bank (for example)

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

The NZ ETS is a very lame duck (sorry ducks) and needs a major overhaul to be even half way effective. To me the question is more fundamental: what is the best mechanism for achieving a zero carbon future e.g. a comprehensive carbon tax. Without these more fundamental questions we as a country wont be able to consider the wealth of international opinion that favours mechanisms like a carbon tax, incentives for renewable energy etc as being more efficient and effective than even a well performing ETS

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

We need to place a strong emphasis on the views of informed laypeople being represented on the Commission in a way, for example, that ethics committees have always done.

Clause

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

Position

No

Notes

Adaptation (along with retreat from the inevitable consequences of the rest of the world not playing ball) should be subject to separate mechanisms. Adaptation Plans can be a way of sliding out of the core responsibility of zero greenhouse emissions. Adaptation plans (including retreat) are sensibly tackled at a regional level albeit with national policy statement and national financing while a zero greenhouse emissions can only be tackled at the national level

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

But see answer to Q14

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?

Notes

Don't know, don't have a firm view on this

Clause

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

Notes

The Coalition Government should be congratulated for taking this step as it is probably the key issue we will all have to face in the medium term.