

Your submission to Zero Carbon Bill

Reference no: 770

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

A set target will encourage immediate action and create momentum towards further change.

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

This represents an ambitious target, that will once again put New Zealand in a respectable place internationally. Ideally New Zealand would also seek to remediate the harm done to the environment by past failures to cover externalized costs of pollution. It is important to recognise the varying effects of greenhouse gases, and develop plans to deal with each accordingly. (e.g. long lived gases such as nitrous oxide will require a different approach to short lived gases such as methane). A framework for testing new

Clause

3. How should New Zealand meet its targets?

Position

Domestic emissions reductions only (including from new forest planting)

Notes

Meeting emissions by purchasing carbon units is fraught with perils, such as the difficulty of accurately setting a carbon price. Internal emissions reductions are more accountable, prevent the damage at source and are more likely to result in a green environment in New Zealand.

Clause

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

Position

Yes

Notes

Revisions should be allowed to occur if the body of scientific evidence (such as the IPCC report) was to significantly revise its position. Economic considerations should not be grounds for revision of the bill, as it is already clear that short term externalization of the economic costs of environmental damage make for better business. However it is also clear that the long term consequence of this is significant environmental damage.

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

The use of long term plans that operate across (and despite) changes in government would seem to be a highly effective method of ensuring changes are actually made.

Clause

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

Position

No - emissions budgets should not be able to be changed

Notes

Budget changes should only be allowed if the body of scientific evidence demands it, as this is the only way to ensure consistent application of the required standard of environmental protection.

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

No

Notes

As above

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

These constraints seem reasonable, however I believe care needs to be taken to ensure scientific evidence is weighed adequately against economic considerations.

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

Without time frames, legislation becomes essentially meaningless and can be stalled into non-existence, or at least complete ineffectiveness.

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

Sustainability, effectiveness, and based on latest evidence. Working groups will need to include the scientific community, New Zealand citizens and business leaders.

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 believe the Commission should be advisory, with mechanisms to hold the government to account - this will ensure action is taken and a real cost is imposed when the system is disregarded.

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

Advising the Government on policy settings in the NZ ETS

Notes

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

The range of expertise seems sensible, though I would add that public health effects from climate change could be significant and are perhaps warranted on the panel.

Clause

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

Position

Yes

Notes

The two functions seem to link together strongly, and the bills function of limiting potential runaway climate change will not necessarily prevent already locked in climate change. It would seem redundant to have two separate bodies with such similar functions.

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

At the very least the information gathering sections are highly appropriate, as we cannot plan for what we do not understand.

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

Open information is crucial to dealing effectively with the issue, and may help to prevent resources being wasted by different entities on the same projects.

Clause

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

Notes

I believe the Zero Carbon Bill is an essential part of ensuring the future of New Zealand, and placing us as a leader among environmentally responsible nations of the world. It can also be managed in such a way as to create new business opportunities for New Zealanders and ensure we transition to a future focused green economy.

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