A climate law like the Zero Carbon Act is important because...
The crisis of climate change is non-political and affects us all. Therefore addressing it should not be a policy kicked back and forth like a political football, coming and going according to the government of the day. There is a real cost to every day that climate change is not addressed. Action on this physical crisis has to be mandated by an instrument of law, binding all NZ governments of whatever political stripe to reach a zero-emissions state by a specified date that is supported by the science.

Long-term target
I support the most ambitious target of reducing total greenhouse gases to net zero by 2050. I also support taking a science-based approach to ensure our efforts to reduce emissions are as impactful as possible: we should aim for negative levels of long-lived gases, while reducing short-lived gases to sustainable levels. This target should be reached by reducing our own emissions and not by using international carbon credits.

Climate Commission
I support the establishment of an independent Climate Commission that is made up of experts and provides advice, but does not make final decisions.

Adaptation
I support a plan for adaptation being included in the Zero Carbon Act.

Climate justice
A Zero Carbon Act must be just and fair in that it honours Te Tiriti o Waitangi; ensures a just transition for workers and communities; and avoids passing on the costs to future generations.

Further comments
It is extremely important that the reduction of other gases like methane and nitrous oxide are included in the Zero Carbon act for three reasons:

1) Methane breaks down into carbon dioxide. So every reduction in methane emissions is also a reduction in our overall CO2 emissions, when considered over time.

2) The other gases are much more potent in their Global Warming Potential (GWP).
CO2 has a GWP of 1. Methane (CH4) is estimated to have a GWP of 28–36 and Nitrous Oxide (N2O) has a GWP of 265–298. So every tonne of these gases emitted has a disproportionately huge warming effect when compared to CO2.

3) Because these gases are shorter-lived in the atmosphere than CO2, cutting their emission provides an immediate decrease in temperature; whereas cutting carbon dioxide emissions does not. This is very important, as we know that climate change impacts increase non-linearly and we must avoid crossing over irreversible tipping points. Fast reduction of non-CO2 greenhouse gases lets us start to turn the ship around long much faster than if the act only includes CO2.

Also, we cannot afford to allow “special pleading” for any industry to be allowed to continue to pollute. In implementing this act we are already stating that Climate change is a crisis of unprecedented scale and impact that must be urgently addressed. All sectors of NZ must have the act applied to them, without exception.
Hi ZCB submissions team – see below, additional information to take into account in your submissions analysis

Thanks

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Sent: Wednesday, 11 July 2018 10:08 AM

Subject: Proposal to mandate a "Climate day memorandum" in the Carbon Zero act

Kia ora Ms Bircher,

Thank you for contacting the Hon James Shaw and for your submission to the Zero Carbon Bill. I will pass on the additional information you have sent through to the team analysing all the submissions, so your additional comments will be taken into account. Ngā mihi,

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Sent: Wednesday, 11 July 2018 8:02 AM

To: J Shaw (MIN) <J.Shaw@ministers.govt.nz>

Subject: [Maybe Spam] Proposal to mandate a "Climate day memorandum" in the Carbon Zero act

Hello Mr Shaw.

First, thank you very much for making the Carbon Zero act a reality. I have already made a submission on the act, but subsequently have become aware of additional information which I would have liked to include in my submission but did not. As I'm not sure if you can make multiple submissions, I thought I would bring this information to your attention, although probably you already know about it.

I was reading about Denmark's proposed new Climate Law:

What I liked was this part:

"On the fourth Thursday of October every year — "Climate Day" — the government will issue a public memorandum reviewing progress toward climate goals and laying out plans for the year ahead."

This strikes me as a great way to keep public attention focused on greenhouse gas reduction progress, and keep the carbon zero act front and centre in politics (no matter what combination of parties is governing). There's nothing better than transparency. I think it would be great if our bill had a similar "Required annual memorandum" component.

Best regards

Catherine Bircher.