

Your submission to Zero Carbon Bill

Reference no: 2387

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

I think this will provide the country with a degree of certainty and confidence. It will also demonstrate New Zealand's leadership, regionally and globally, in addressing climate 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

We need to do as much as we possibly can to reduce our impact on the world's climate. It does not make sense to aim for anything less. The sooner we set this target, the sooner we can start transitioning. It would be devastating if we set a less-ambitious target now, only to discover a decade or two into the future that it was not good enough and that we should have done more.

Clause

3. How should New Zealand meet its targets?

Position

Domestic emissions reductions (including from new forest planting) and using some emissions reductions from overseas (international carbon units) that have strong environmental safeguards

Notes

I am aware that I don't understand this system very well, but I think that the primary goal should be to reduce the nett emissions of the entire planet. Therefore, the manner in which individual countries contribute towards achieving this goal is secondary to actually achieving this global goal. Being a small island, I imagine that it could be very difficult for New Zealand to make a significant contribution to global emissions reductions or even to meet our targets on our own, without having a crippling impact on our economy. Although I have not studied any data on this, it makes sense to me that New Zealand should work in partnership with other countries, which may have more space or opportunities for reducing or off-setting emissions, to meet our targets. I imagine that some countries would benefit enormously (and in diverse ways) from being paid by New Zealand to do things like tree-planting or protecting rainforests in their own countries. The benefits for people and biodiversity could be tremendous. Having said this, I think New Zealand should demonstrate good leadership in doing as much as possible to reduce our own domestic emissions, while creating incentives for other countries to do what they can too.

Clause

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

Position

Yes

Notes

It is very important that scientists and researchers continually investigate and monitor what is happening to our planet, and that they continually update policy-makers so they can make informed decisions. As a society we need to be continually learning all the time and we need to be willing to change as more information comes to light or as circumstances change. So yes, I think we need to give ourselves the flexibility to change the target if circumstances change. This is another reason why I think New Zealand should aim for the most ambitious target of the 3 options. If circumstances change and it turns out that further emissions reductions are required, globally, New Zealand will be in the best possible position to adapt, as we will already be aiming for zero net emissions. And if, fortuitously, the climate begins to stabilise, we may even be able to relax our restrictions on emissions - although I doubt this would happen before 2050.

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?

Notes

I like the idea of three emissions budgets - but I don't feel I am sufficiently informed to comment on whether 5 years is the most appropriate duration for each budget. Instinctively, I think 5 years is a very short time frame. Is 5 years long enough for us to make the changes we need to make and adapt, before an even stricter target is implemented? I do like the sense of urgency - I just wonder

how achievable it is.

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

I'm not sure how well I understand the implications of these options. Nevertheless, I think the ability to alter the last budget is important as we may learn things along the way that should inform the setting of that third target. However, I'd like the third budget to be insulated from party politics.

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

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

Yes - we will all need to know what these plans are, so we have some certainty and confidence e.g. regarding investments we may be considering

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 government needs to invest significantly in public awareness, communication and education throughout this process. As an educator, I'm acutely aware of how limited the public understanding is of these issues. If changes will need to be made across all areas of government and in all sectors and industries, then it is imperative that the general public are kept informed and supported to make good decisions.

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

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

I don't understand the implications of these options but it seems to me that the ETS will be an important tool or mechanism for achieving our targets, so the CC Commission should definitely have a say in how the system is used.

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

I don't think the Commissioners should be politicians, primarily. I think it is essential that they are subject-experts with the required technical skills and experience to provide the guidance and advice the government will need.

Clause

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

Position

Yes

Notes

Clause

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

Notes

I'm excited to see this happening and I appreciate the effort that is going into consultations such as the public meeting I attended in Invercargill. I feel proud to be a citizen of New Zealand and I'm so pleased to see our new government acting so quickly and confidently on this issue. Thank you for the opportunity to participate.

You have elected to withhold your personal details from publication.