

Your submission to Zero Carbon Bill

Reference no: 2407

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

We should aim for a negative level of long-lived gases. New Zealand should have at least the forestry potential to pursue this goal, and may well be a great place for marine permaculture as well. I also support a science-based approach to ensure we have the most impactful ways of reducing emissions.

Clause

2. If the Government sets a 2050 target now, which is the best target for New Zealand?

Position

Net Zero Carbon Dioxide - Reducing net carbon dioxide emissions to zero by 2050

Notes

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 would like to seriously qualify my answer - it is not clear that any present international units would truly meet strong environmental safeguards. Using international credits should come with commensurate increases in ambition of targets (eg looking to negative emissions). The New Zealand government should itself be able to verify the credibility of any international units.

Clause

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

Position

No

Notes

Any change should have to be by new legislative change - I read this as allowing an alteration by the Minister alone. If changes are allowed, the criteria for this should be clearly set out as only including major changes in scientific knowledge or international agreements. Economic changes should not be enough - this would undermine the credibility of the target.

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

No - emissions budgets should not be able to be changed

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

No

Notes

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

Notes

I agree that the Government and the Climate Commission should take the following factors into consideration when advising on and setting budgets: • scientific knowledge regarding climate change • technology relevant to climate change • economic circumstances and the likely impact of a decision on the economy, as well as the competitiveness of particular sectors of the economy • fiscal circumstances and the likely impact of the decision on taxation, public spending and public borrowing • social circumstances and the likely impact of a decision on fuel poverty • energy policy and the likely impact of a decision on energy supplies and the carbon and energy intensity of the economy.

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

This is absolutely critical, otherwise the obligations to meet targets are avoidable. For most people, the actual policies required to meet targets will mean the most. I also believe the Act should include a clear accountability mechanism where plans are set out that will not meet budgets. I would support an option that created a statutory framework for judicial review of plans. This could either be open review allowing judicial review of plans that will not meet targets (and therefore fail to meet the government's obligations), or otherwise review if the government cannot justify a deviation from the recommendations of the Climate Change Commission.

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's policy plans to meet emission budgets should be comprehensive, fair, cost-effective, environmentally sustainable, and reflect a commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The government should specifically have to consider the longer-term implications of the plans, so that it has to justify any situation where it is relying on later emissions reductions rather than sooner. It should also have to clearly specify exact emissions reductions from policies in the plan, so that it is clear that the plan meets the budget.

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

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

I agree with the following collective expertise: • climate change policy (including emissions trading) • resource economics and impacts (including social impacts, labour markets and distribution) • te Tiriti o Waitangi, te reo me ona tikanga Māori and Māori interests • climate and environmental science including mātauranga Māori • experience with addressing adaptation challenges like planning, insurance and local government • risk management • engineering and/or infrastructure • community engagement and communications. • business competitiveness • knowledge of the public and private innovation and technology development system. I think expertise in public health is also important. Knowledge of agriculture could also be useful.

Clause

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

Position

Yes

Notes

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

Notes

I agree with the proposed functions below, but recognise that nuance is required in terms of how local councils are involved: • a national climate change risk assessment • a national adaptation plan • regular review of progress towards implementing the national adaptation plan • an adaptation reporting power

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**Clause**

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

Notes

I am a qualified New Zealand lawyer with a Masters Degree in Environmental and Energy Law from New York University. I am 27 years old and will see substantial impacts of climate change in my lifetime. I think it is important that in addition to setting targets and plans, New Zealand indicates its real present commitment to taking action on climate change, by introducing a functional price on carbon. A Zero Carbon Act could be passed to include a set of current policies to help reduce emissions straight away, and the credibility of the law would be boosted if we saw action being taken right away.

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