

# Your submission to Zero Carbon Bill

Peter Deacon, **Peter Harley Deacon**

## Reference no: 2449

**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

The Government, with advice from the interim Climate Change Committee and in due course the Climate Change Commission, should set a mandatory decarbonisation target for 2050 in legislation now - with suitable monitoring mechanisms and sanctions to enforce it. This should be done in accordance with NZ's commitments under the Paris Agreement, and based on the clear and unequivocal scientific consensus that global warming must be kept below 2 degrees C to avoid dangerous and irreversible climate disruption. This does not need any consultation process with special interest groups that will attempt to water down or undermine the target to suit their own short term needs - as this is a long term, global problem that will only be solved by long term solutions which will be very unpopular to many people who neither understand or care about the magnitude of the crisis we face. The government must now LEAD on this existential threat - the mandate for rapid government action NOW is provided by the Paris Agreement commitment and the clear scientific facts which show we must reduce all GHG emissions by around 10% per annum, year on year, to have any chance of staying below 2 degrees C of warming by the latter half of this century. If we act too slowly now (and we have already wasted 30 years while emissions have shot up) then the consequences will be catastrophic for both the environment and our society.

### 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

The most ambitious target: 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. The latest scientific reports all indicate that the climate is changing much faster than even the worst earlier projections, as more and more positive warming feed-backs come into play. Even achieving net zero GHG emissions by 2050 will not be sufficient on its own to avoid 2 degrees of warming - there must also be negative global emissions after 2050 because it is the cumulative amount of GHG that matters and by then the CO2 concentration will still be well above the safe long term level of around 350ppm - even if we achieve zero annual emissions.

### Clause

3. How should New Zealand meet its targets?

### Position

Domestic emissions reductions only (including from new forest planting)

### Notes

Buying carbon credits is a flawed policy and a waste of NZ taxpayer's money which would be better spent on decarbonising our own economy and way of life.

### Clause

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

### Position

No

### Notes

The 2050 target should not be altered in response to "economic changes" as this undermines its long-term certainty. However, the ability to revise the 2050 target in light of major changes in scientific understanding or international agreements should be permitted. All countries must be carbon zero by 2050 to have any chance of a stable climate and habitable ecosystem in the long term and even this is probably an insufficiently ambitious target to prevent very damaging effects on human health and safety, our infrastructure and biodiversity.

### 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**

yes - I agree with 5-year budgets set 10-15 years in advance, so that 3 are in effect at all times.

**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**

No - emissions budgets should not be altered in response to "economic changes" as this undermines their long-term certainty. However, the ability to revise budgets in light of major changes in scientific understanding or international agreements should be permitted.

**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**

No - emissions budgets should not be altered in response to "economic changes" as this undermines their long-term certainty. However, the ability to revise budgets in light of major changes in scientific understanding or international agreements should be permitted.

**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**

In principle I agree - however what matters most is the scientific data and consensus on the need to fully decarbonise our civilisation as soon as possible. Therefore other considerations such as economic circumstances, competitiveness of particular sectors, fiscal circumstances, taxation, public spending and public borrowing etc should be secondary to the scientific advice which is crystal clear on what we must do to survive. Also when considering the economic, societal and fiscal factors - the negative long term effects on these of not acting swiftly and decisively to address climate change must be compared and balanced against the short term effects - which pale into insignificance - and the government must make this case loudly and forcefully to the public, business and special interest groups. The costs of not acting on anthropogenic global warming will be far higher in the future and more far reaching than the costs of acting now.

**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 must learn from the mistakes of the UK's Climate Change Act and specify a strict time frame for producing a plan.

**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. Follow the science not the money. Work with the scientific community to decide what needs to happen and not the corporations that neither fully understand the climate change problem nor are willing to compromise their balance sheets or share prices today for the future well-being of the biosphere. Consider the consequences for our grandchildren's grandchildren of not acting when we manifestly know what is causing climate change and we know the solutions - but are just too greedy, lazy or self-interested to make the necessary changes and sacrifices to our lifestyles today to ensure a decent future for our descendants.

**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**

ETS schemes and cap and trade are both failed policy approaches to global warming/climate change and have not delivered any discernible reduction in global emissions which have risen exponentially since Kyoto. A universal, steadily rising fee on emitting greenhouse gases is the only effective way to curb emissions and incentivise the transition to 100% clean energy. The sooner the world accepts this reality the better.

**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 and legislation being implemented by environmentally progressive countries • 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.

**Clause**

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

**Position**

Yes

**Notes**

Yes. This may require a separate adaptation sub-committee within the Climate Commission.

**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**

I agree with the proposed functions below • a national climate change risk assessment • a national adaptation plan • regular review of progress towards implementing the national adaptation plan • an adaptation reporting power These will need to be backed up by mandatory requirements on local government, businesses and large industry sectors such as agriculture, viticulture, transport, tourism etc to report on how their particular organisation or sector is progressing and what new threats/impacts have been identified/quantified and what plans/actions are being implemented.

**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**

Yes - see my comments in section 15.