

Your submission to Zero Carbon Bill

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Reference no: 9097

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

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

Clause

3. How should New Zealand meet its targets?

Position

Domestic emissions reductions only (including from new forest planting)

Notes

As a developed nation, NZ is in a good position to demonstrate that a net zero emissions economy and society is not only possible, but can be prosperous. Relying on international carbon units is not consistent with that approach. In fact, NZ should seek to become an exporter of emissions reductions units. Poorer countries, many of which have low levels of industrialisation, may need to emit longer in order to achieve development to levels equivalent to NZ. By purchasing international carbon units, we are depriving poorer countries of the finite (and quickly diminishing) resource of allowable GHG emissions.

Clause

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

Position

Yes

Notes

For pragmatic purposes, targets should be allowed to be revised. However, clear guidelines should be set for what those circumstances are.

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

Yes

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

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

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 agree with the plan proposing that the commission has an advisory role rather than a decision-making role. This is consistent with our political system: the main decisions are made by elected officials who are accountable to the public.

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 have not seen information on how the appointment process will operate. Given that there are likely to be some highly charged political issues around the commission, it may make sense to set out this process in more detail than usual. For instance, it may make sense to set term limits for commissioners. This could limit the ability of future governments to make political appointments to the commission, which bias its recommendations towards short-term political goals. This kind of "stacking" of an organisation is typically harder for voters to hold to account, as it is less visible than the usual things voters consider when casting a vote.

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

Position

Yes

Notes

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

Although a net zero target by 2050 is ambitious, it is likely to be insufficient to avoid even 2 degrees warming (even assuming all the

world's major emitters do the same). Recent research has shown that global emissions must peak by no later than 2030 to have a reasonable chance of staying below 2 degrees (<https://eciu.net/assets/peak-emissions/>), and even this assumes negative emissions will occur on a large scale later this century. Given this reality of the situation, it is worth considering an even more ambitious target: net zero by 2040.