

Zero Carbon Bill Submission.

There isn't any country in the world that doesn't have some GHG emissions so we should accept that striving for full zero is a pipe dream. A goal should be realistic, achievable and measurable not something that is unattainable. We will always have some contributing GHG from international shipping and air travel. Volcanoes and earthquakes produce GHG. Offsetting through tree planting is not a sustainable process: currently we would need to plant 15 trees per person per year to compensate for current production which at 150 trees/hectare would require half a million hectares a year: the country would be completely forested in 50 years.

All this leads me to question how we perceive GHG production. With no animals and large forest areas NZ naturally should have been GHG negative before industrialisation. Should we now attribute all animal GHG as human because we brought in (and farm) all the animals here or can we make allowance for a natural exotic population. Is our own breathing sacrosanct. What's the point of worrying about GHG production when a single volcanic eruption can eclipse all our efforts for decades.

I feel this Bill is misguided. As I understand it, our GHG production consists of; 44% CO₂, 43% CH₄ and 12% N₂O but that these gases have significantly different effects on climate change. In terms of climate damage 44% CO₂ only produces ~ 2% of damage, the 43% CH₄ contributes ~30% of the damage while 12% N₂O contributes almost 70%. It would seem more effective to concentrate initially on eliminating or substantially reducing N₂O production if preventing climate change is the goal. Apparently 80% of that derives from animal excreta so that provides a distinct problem to solve. Given a large part of our CH₄ emissions are also livestock related, it seems concentrated effort in this field could prove far more beneficial, especially in terms of alleviating climate change, than any dickering with CO₂. I'm not advocating reducing livestock numbers, although the glacial development of added value products in the dairy industry could be part of the solution. For all I know, the answer could range from cow diapers to different grass/clover feedstock or fallow crops, but it seems to be a problem crying out for a solution.

So, my submission is that this Bill be rewritten to address the concerns listed above: concentrate on N₂O rather than CO₂. I note that society's awareness is moving on CO₂ reduction anyway so its appropriate to develop an emphasis on the other GHGs.

As to setting up a Climate Change Commission, we already have a Ministry and Commissioner for the Environment to provide advice so I don't believe we need any more.

From

Robert Murray