Purpose of the proposed zero-carbon bill

The purpose of the proposed zero-carbon bill should be much more substantive than setting targets. Had this bill been proposed 30 years ago when Dr James Hansen testified to a then-receptive United States Senate, a targets-based bill might have been entirely appropriate. In 2018, there is vanishing likelihood that we have the luxury or a further two decades before becoming zero-carbon.

https://www.nature.com/articles/s41561-018-0146-0

Name of proposed climate commission

Names are crucially important. If the purpose of an equivalent of the United Kingdom’s Committee on Climate Change is climate action, then the proposed climate commission should be titled: Climate-Action Commission

https://vecan.net/governors-climate-action-commission/

Deep review of emissions trading scheme

New Zealand’s emissions trading scheme is an abject failure. The proposed zero-carbon bill must allow for a deep review of the scheme and open-mindedly assess alternatives to it, including the straight fee-and-dividend mechanism consistently advocated by Dr James Hansen, or a carbon tax and climate-action quantitative easing approach possibly better suited the a less tax-averse country.


https://www.wsj.com/articles/green-quantitative-easing-1495173792

Science advisor to the climate-action commission

In the government’s 61-page discussion document Our Climate Your Say, the word science appears only 9 times. For the proposed climate bill to be robust, an evidence-based approach is non-optional. In particular, the proposed climate commission must include a full-time chief science advisor role.

The discussion document mentions electric vehicles six times, public transport four times. The Committee on Climate Change’s 2018 progress report to United Kingdom Parliament mentions public transport 13 times, culminating with: Public transport must be incentivised.

Professor Sir Peter Gluckman’s Methamphetamine Contamination in Residential Properties: Exposures, Risk Levels, and Interpretation of Standards is testimony the need for evidence-based policy-making. Likewise, a zero-carbon bill that panders to the popular notion that global warming can be prevented by a painless switch to electric vehicles, and batteries photovoltaic panels is, as the former United Kingdom government’s Department of Energy and Climate Change chief scientific adviser, the late Professor David MacKay, in his last-ever interview, an “appalling delusion.”


https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/may/03/idea-of-renewables-powering-uk-is-an-appalling-delusion-david-mackay

Imperative for holistic approach to climate action

Because humanity has painted itself into a corner with its greenhouse gas emissions, climate action must be addressed with every policy decision addressing urgent issues in every other theatre.

An example is the global epidemic of noncommunicable diseases. It has been found that of all the interventions tried, such as incentivising healthier lifestyles, public transport, and only public transport, makes a significant, positive impact.

The holistic approach, then, is the most cost-effective route to meaningful climate action.


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