Your submission to Zero Carbon Bill

Robina Stevens

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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
I think this is a more rigorous and truly robust reduction strategy. New Zealand's international influence comes largely from leading by example, and being in a position to encourage other countries to make net reductions calculated using domestic emissions is powerful.

Clause 4. Should the Zero Carbon Bill allow the 2050 target to be revised if circumstances change?
Position
Yes
Notes
I think that we should be guided by the best available, rigorous, evidence. If evidence emerges that we need to alter our targets then yes, I think the target should be able to be revised.

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
Certainty into the next 15 years is absolutely invaluable for businesses/developers/scientists who are going to be innovating in this space.

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
If the budgets are set each 15 years with the best available evidence then no, I don't think they should be able to be changed. It would seem that this is just a way of weakening a process that we should be fully committed to.

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
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
No
Notes
I strongly believe that the decisions of the Climate Change Commission should be binding. The whole point of having a politically independent panel of experts for a serious, existential threat such as climate change is that they can provide the sound, evidence-based decisions that we need without contamination by political interests. New Zealand should be courageous in taking this strong position and use it to leverage other countries to do the same. Climate change is not a political issue; it affects all of us.

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 that business competitiveness is non-essential. The main function of the body would be to reduce and mitigate the effects of climate change for our health and wellbeing. Profit has no part in this.

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
Coordinating this on a national level makes sense for a country with as small a population as New Zealand.

Clause
Do you have any other comments you'd like to make?
Notes
Thank you for the opportunity to submit on this crucial issue. I am a New Zealander, a trained engineer, a trainee doctor, and a parent, and therefore I cannot exhort you more strongly to put ambitious and importantly, binding strategies in place to reach zero emissions. I want New Zealand to be a leader on the international stage with regards to our approach. We can inspire other countries, be on the right side of history, and transform our economy to be more intelligent and sustainable. My training in engineering makes it clear to me that risks from climate change are real, present and extremely expensive - strong action to prevent climate change and mitigate its effects are the most environmentally and economically sound response to this massive challenge. Physics does not care what the ideology of a particular government is, and a strong response to climate change should not be a political issue. I am one year away from qualifying as a doctor. We know that the effects of climate change on health are going to be increasingly dramatic, with new diseases and natural disasters causing morbidity and mortality in ways that are currently unknown to New Zealanders. Vulnerable populations are particularly at risk and thus mitigating climate change is an important part of health equity in an already very unequally healthy society. Finally, I am desperate for my two young children to inherit a society, economy, and world that is smart, sustainable,
safe, and equitable. I often speak to them about how we elect our leaders to make brave decisions that help us make our societies better, and I call on you to show true leadership and commit to ambitious, binding targets that we can be proud of. The science shows us that we have no other option, so let's be ahead of the curve and ride out this challenge in style. With thanks and respect, Robina Stevens