

Your submission to Zero Carbon Bill

Reference no: 9496

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 goal to reach net zero emissions by the second half of the century and the Climate Change Commission advises on the specific target for the Government to set later

Notes

I strongly support the immediate creation of a Zero Carbon Act. This act should ensure cross-party consensus for an effective and just transition to a low-carbon economy. In light of latest findings by the leaked reports of the IPCC - I also support the goals proposed by forest and bird and WWF for a more ambitious goal of Zero Carbon by 2040. I am a 33 year old female young professional who has returned to NZ to work in the Sustainability profession. I did so after studying a NZ environmental course online. This course opened my eyes to the ways in which the NZ environment and society had been mis-managed (unmanaged) under a neo-liberal agenda. I left this country as a proud Kiwi, proud of our clean environment, our unique native fauna and flora and proud of our history for standing up for justice (Springbok tour). I returned dismayed by the systemic degradation of all these things that I held dear. I was disturbed by how little people (especially the children of the 80's) were aware that we were sleep walking into a future that is exactly opposite to what most NZers value. This Zero Carbon act is a chance to reverse all of the damage that has been done, and a chance to create a resilient and just future. We must be ambitious and we must be bold otherwise we risk entrenching the apathy that will lead to our demise.

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

- Of the proposed 'net zero' options I strongly support the net zero emissions across all greenhouse gases by "2040".
- I support taking a two baskets approach to reach preferably negative emissions caused by long-lived gas emissions and the reduction of short-lived to sustainable levels.
- I advocate that the sustainable levels of short-lived gases is determined by science and not vested interests (or outdated economists).
- 1. It is urgent that short lived gases such as methane from agriculture are cut back to sustainable levels and this option is the only one that gives a clear mandate for rapid action.
- 2. I advocate that the sustainable level is determined by scientists (not 'economists') best able to model the risk posed to interacting natural systems.
- 3. Reducing methane to a sustainable level is vital. Scientists reiterate that we dance dangerously close to a tipping point that could see run-away melting in permafrosts and Antarctic ice sheets. The consequences of which would be devastating to wildlife, economies, infrastructure and human beings (food security, mass migration, sea level rise). Avoiding the rapid reduction of methane is like playing Russian Roulette with our life-enabling planetary conditions - is this really a game we want to play? I would personally find a win-win game far less anxiety inducing.
- 4. Long-lived GHG (such as carbon and nitrous oxide) should at minimum be reduced to zero, and the goal should be to reach negative emissions. Our economy should be re-designed as a regenerative economy that gives back to the natural systems that sustain us.

Clause

3. How should New Zealand meet its targets?

Position

Domestic emissions reductions (including from new forest planting) and using some emissions reductions from overseas (international carbon units) that have strong environmental safeguards

Notes

- A gross reduction target should be set to ensure an ambitious minimum amount of reductions occur in NZ across multiple industries.
- The net target should focus primarily on domestic reductions - the 'Firewall principal' advocated by Generation Zero will ensure our own zero carbon transition is on track.
- Priority of support should be given to NZU's that are verified to ensure Sustainable Development Goals such as land and water quality, equality, and community development. It should reinforce the economic adaptation strategy that I mention in my closing statement.
- Emissions that cannot be met after the gross reduction target and NZU's have been purchased - should prioritise projects that occur in our Pacific region (ensuring their economic transition) and these projects should meet the same Sustainable Development Goals we advocate for in NZ.

Notes: 1. By creating a strong gross reduction target we will create the financial incentive for decarbonising NZ's economy rapidly (across infrastructure, transport, agriculture and energy). 2. The gross reduction target should ensure that it is no longer a viable financial option to continue with GHG emitting activities e.g over farmed farms, heavily nitrated farms, coal burning infrastructure, mining for fossil fuels.

Clause

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

Position

No

Notes

The Zero Carbon bill target should only be revised to be more ambitious, or if exceptional circumstances occur (such as a major natural disaster not linked to climate change e.g. a major earthquake or volcano in NZ). • These circumstances should be independently reviewed and verified by the parliamentary commission. If the commission decides that a government has tried to misleadingly revise the target, this should result in strong consequence for the acting government. • Revisions will need to take into account the impact on long-term strategies that have been planned to exist as cross-party investments. Notes: 1. We must not create a political environment where it is easy to review budgets. We need to build that will create ambitious investment, innovation, business leadership and the necessity for government to put in place transitional support networks that will ensure a fair and just transition. 2. It is important that any revision to the budget be reviewed and signed off as necessary by the parliamentary commission to avoid a government passing the buck to the successive government. 3. Money required in aid of natural disasters caused by the effects of climate change should not be seen as a reason to avoid set budgets. Economic changes such as reduced GDP would NOT be a valid reason for revision.

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 support the government's proposal for there to be emissions budgets that clearly set out pathways for achieving these goals over 5 yearly periods. • The budgets should be at a level recommended by the Climate Commission and approved by Parliament • These budgets should priorities ambitious gross domestic emission budget mentioned above: Q3 • These budgets should ensure cross-party cooperation for long term investment projects that will ensure a fast and ambitious transition to a low carbon economy. 1. Adopting long-term strategies will minimise costs and maximise the benefits to this country. It is recognized that in the UK, they have suffered from a dip in their carbon reductions due to this process. Investing in infrastructure now, will save us money in the future. 2. Rather than simply focusing on the low hanging fruit, each budget should give a portion of its focus to the longer-term investments that will become increasingly expensive if they are kicked down the road for future budgets (next governments) to deal with.

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. Budgets should only be revised in exceptional circumstances. It is not appropriate for a new government to "have a say" on an upcoming budget which has already been set. This would create too much uncertainty and instability as we swing between right and left governments.

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

• Yes, I agree with Generation Zero's submission point that only under exception circumstances e.g it might be appropriate to change an upcoming budget after an extreme natural disaster (such as a major earthquake). Revising a budget in this situation would not mean changing the long-term 2050 target. To provide maximum certainty and accountability, budgets should not be revised unless the circumstances are exceptional.

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

No

Notes

Not all of them. I do NOT agree that the competitiveness of existing sectors of the economy should be a key consideration. 1. If we give priority to this consideration - then we risk not making the ambitious changes that will see us situate ourselves as leaders of a new low-carbon economy. Vested interests have already held back investment and change for too long. It is time for these economic considerations to take a back seat for the new low-carbon economy.

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

I support Generation Zero's submission point. A weakness of the UK Climate Change Act, on which the Zero Carbon Act is based, is that the UK Act does not set clear timeframes for the government to make policy plans to meet future emission budgets (which are set 10-15 years in advance). Generation Zero supports the Zero Carbon Act having a strict time frame for setting out policy plans. This time frame should be 6 months after an emission budget has been set.

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

I support and reference Generation Zero's submission point: • 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. For an explanation of these principles, see the section above about "Zero Carbon Act principles".

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

• Yes. I support the Climate Commission having two functions (a) providing expert advice, and (b) monitoring our progress and holding the government to account. • The Commission should not be a decision-making body in the first case, because of issues of democratic accountability and the risk that they would be a less-effective watch dog if they had decision making capabilities that only had to self-monitor • To ensure transparency and accountability, the Government must table all its reports in Parliament. • The climate commission should be able to disable governments that are not meeting their commitments. • If after the first two budget terms (10 years) it is evident that the commissions advise is not being followed, I suggest a review that would move it to having decision making powers. 1. If we do not have a strong consequence to not meeting the budget, we will not have rapid and ambitious change. • The Commission should not be a decision-making body in the first case, because of issues of democratic accountability and the risk that they would be a less-effective watch dog if they had decision making capabilities that only had to self-monitor • To ensure transparency and accountability, the Government must table all its reports in Parliament. • The climate commission should be able to disable governments that are not meeting their commitments. 1. If we do not have a strong consequence to not meeting the budget, we will not have rapid and ambitious change.

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

No

Notes

Yes I agree with all except, I agree with Generation Zero's submission point • Missing from this proposed list is expertise in public health. A further consideration is that, if adaptation is included in the Zero Carbon Act (see Q14), it will be important to think carefully about how many Commissioners should have adaptation-specific expertise. It might be a good idea to have a separate committee which focuses on adaptation issues, as is the case in the UK.

Clause

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

Position

Yes

Notes

•Addressing the impacts of climate change (such as droughts, sea level rise, and displacement should all be included in the Zero Carbon Act) • The Climate Commission should contribute its expertise to our adaptation response. See Q13. Examples: 1. I currently have a mortgage in Nelson with my partner in an area that is facing a 1 in 100 year risk of flooding. This is % risk is likely to increase as the impacts of locked in climate change continue. This area is home to hundreds of homes, and the impact of this sea level rise will affect all of these homes - risking stranded assets and displacement. How can the government plan to assist the 1000's of kiwis who are facing a similar situation. 2. My Father who lives in the same region has worked all of his life to retire in his home by the river. Increased rain fall combined with king tides are seriously threatening his home and life-savings. 3. A large proportion of Nelson (like many other cities in NZ) are built on reclaimed land. How will governments support local governments to insulate against the risks to

the business district posed by sea level rise.

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 Generation Zero's submission point that supports the government being required to prepare a national climate risk assessment, and a national policy plan to address these risks. A monitoring and reporting framework is also important. We need to think carefully about how local councils should be involved in these processes.

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. I support exploring this option in more detail.

Clause

Do you have any other comments you'd like to make?

Notes

I would like to advocate for a strategy of fair and just 'economic adaptation' towards a doughnut economic model. I use this term 'economic adaptation' to reference the exciting opportunity to redesign our low-carbon economy in a way ensures a just transition for workers employed in high-carbon jobs while also ensure we take care of our most vulnerable in society. By moving away from a neo-liberal focus on GDP as the only measure of prosperity, we can re-design an economy that sits within the doughnut of planetary boundaries and focuses on the equality and well-being of the people. Urgent action will need to be taken to create a low-carbon economy, for this reason it will be essential to strengthen the safety net created by our government so as to ensure that no one is left behind on this journey.

You have elected to withhold your personal details from publication.