

Your submission to Zero Carbon Bill

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Reference no: 9701

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

The 2050 target must be set in legislation immediately. Urgent that a climate commission and authority with teeth (working independently of the government) gets set up ASAP to drive NZ's emissions reductions to meet targets set by the Paris accord. There is no time to waste! If BAU (Business as usual) continues the 1.5C target will be exceeded in 2 to 3 years and the 2C target in 16 to 17 years.

Clause

2. If the Government sets a 2050 target now, which is the best target for New Zealand?

Position

Net Zero Long-Lived Gases and Stabilised Short-Lived Gases - Long-lived gases to net zero by 2050 while also stabilising short-lived gases

Notes

The options set out by the MfE in this submission are problematic because they are not really addressing the risk posed by methane identified by recent scientific research. Its essential that NZ's relatively high methane emissions are reduced as well as CO2 emissions. The gases are very different and will require different approaches that she be overseen by a climate commission.

Clause

3. How should New Zealand meet its targets?

Position

Domestic emissions reductions only (including from new forest planting)

Notes

The current ETS system has been a farce and has not resulted in any emissions reductions; in fact, NZ's GHG emissions have increased. I suggest the ETS is scrapped in favour of a feebate system where fees paid by high emitters are passed on to zero or low emitters. The fee should reflect the damage being done to the atmosphere by GHG emissions and encourage and reward NZ's population and industry to drastically reduce emissions to Zero carbon. Also although trees will be effective in the short term for reducing carbon its not a long term solution ...as mentioned in question 1 ...its urgent that we reduce emissions now ...there is no time to waste. Also, worth reviewing the very sensible advice in the current Productivity Commission's report on a "Low emissions economy" April 2018

Clause

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

Position

Yes

Notes

Yes ..(There is no Zero Carbon Act yet?!) However in the intervening 32 years between now and 2050 circumstances will change eg the science will become better known. Unfortunately, the trend is that projections of climate change are tending to become more and more severe as BAU continues; hopefully the public and government will be more aware and there will be a greater appreciation that emissions need to be reduced; newer technology may become available to help with emissions reductions.

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 ...however no information on what these might be. Will these be set by the climate commission? However, agree with any mechanism that results in meaningful emissions reductions consistent with Paris Accord goals and implemented ASAP.

Clause

6. Should the Government be able to alter the last emissions budget (i.e. furthest into the future)?

Position

Yes - the third emissions budget should be able to be changed but only when the subsequent budget is set

Notes

Yes should be able to change the 3rd budget but there must always be emissions reductions in place. Otherwise it's a slippery slope leading to removal of emission reductions targets.

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 although once again I would be worried about the removal of emission reductions targets (see question 6).

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

Yes. However, I am suspicious of the phrases on P44 concerning economic and fiscal circumstances. It would be very comfortable to carry on with an intense carbon lifestyle which might seem to be "economically and fiscally" attractive if the damage to the atmosphere is not factored in. However, we can no longer continue with BAU. The fact is that we have to change and change now. Yes its going to be very hard financially but, according to the science, the longer we delay the worse it will be economically anyway, let alone the extra damage to the planet.

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

Yes. Plans to be set by the independent Climate Commission

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

Critical that the government follows the best science advice available and keeps reviewing policies as the science develops eg separate methodologies must be used for each of the greenhouse gases, CO2, CH4 and N2O. Very important to follow progress in other countries. The current Paris Accord pledges do not meet the RCP 2.6 target and will need to be increased. Not also that current research shows that increases in methane concentration have not been taken into account in the data used for the Paris Accord and that RCP 2.6 will have to be urgently revised. This has huge implications for NZ with its GHG emissions profile heavily weighted by methane.

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. Essential that an effective Climate Commission provides this advice with data from an effective and trustworthy monitoring programme.

Clause

12. What role do you think the Climate Change Commission should have in relation to the New Zealand Emissions Trading Scheme (NZ ETS)?

Notes

I've commented on this above in 3. The current ETS has been a disaster compromised with cheap Russian and Ukrainian permits and has resulted in no reductions in NZ GHG emissions. I recommend a feebate scheme as per my response in 3. If this cant be done then somehow a totally transparent ETS system will need to be set up covering all aspects of NZ industry and agriculture.

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

Yes I agree with the criteria listed on P45. However, I think that it is essential that a significant fraction of the Climate Commission should be staffed by engineers and scientists who understand the issues. In addition I think that it is essential that a significant number of engaged and talented young people should be in the commission ...they are the part of the population who will be most affected by any delays in emissions reductions.

Clause

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

Position

No

Notes

No!! The Zero Carbon Bill must be about the urgent pathway that NZ must take to meet and exceed pledges made for the Paris Accord. It must follow best practice science and be strictly monitored by the Climate Commission. Adaptation is a related but very different issue. It has to do with how the NZ population, industry and agriculture adapt to the damage already done to the Earth System. This is more a function of advisory groups and especially local and regional councils under advice from government science organisations. Its worth noting that the current situation is a mess with central government absolving itself of all responsibility for adaptation leaving local councils floundering.

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

Yes I do. But this is a separate issue to the Zero Carbon Bill. Please see my comments for Q14

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 but once again this is a separate issue to the Zero Carbon Bill ...please see my comments in questions above.

Clause

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

Notes

Drafting this bill should take into account and use the very sensible advice in the current Productivity Commission's report on a "Low emissions economy" April 2018