

Your submission to Zero Carbon Bill

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Reference no: 9722

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

Given the planet needs to restrict global warming to no more than 1.5 degrees, considerable work needs to be done. New Zealand needs to play a significant role in this challenge. If the science indicates more needs to be done then the Climate Change Commission must be able to act as required to limit the emissions that increase global warming.

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

There is too much at stake for business, government departments, corporations etc. to find ways to 'save money' in the short term to increase profitability. For example; by using coal for powering industrial processes, not switching to clean energy transport options because initial costs are higher than fossil fuel options, intensive farming options at the expense of the environment. The Climate Change Commission will have its work cut out for it, after 10 years of minimal action. We need to face up to our responsibilities to ourselves and future generations, now. A climate risk assessment is one important element that the commission will need to do. But a whole of government responsibility is essential, this will need to be a bi-partisan approach, even if some may need to be brought kicking and screaming to the table.

Clause

3. How should New Zealand meet its targets?

Position

Domestic emissions reductions only (including from new forest planting)

Notes

We all need to confront commitments to domestic emissions reductions. Each and everyone of us need to reduce emissions that affect climate change. This is going to be a significant change in the way our society is run. This is a Global problem, but one we must also face locally. The effects of this must also be spread fairly across society. We have encouraged a neo-liberal approach to all aspects of our society for too long and this fundamental economic flaw needs addressing. I have little confidence in the international emissions trading schemes the previous government have been involved with, which in a paper provided by Gareth Morgan highlighted "New Zealand has been by far the largest purchaser of these Ukrainian and Russian credits through our Emissions Trading Scheme. This was due to deliberate decisions by the National-led Government", "Virtually all of the credits issued by these countries are 'hot air' - they do not represent true emissions reductions." (pg v Climate Cheats, 2016). In summary we all need to do our bit, but those industries or government departments that can do more for the best interests of all citizens need to show leadership. Or be shown leadership. One aspect of the Climate Change Commission's work will to be to provide guidance and assistance to everyday New Zealanders on how to eliminate climate change emissions.

Clause

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

Position

Yes

Notes

Yes, clearly climate change is occurring, if New Zealand needs to respond more urgently then targets must be adjusted to those circumstances. If the Climate Change Commission finds a more stringent target is required and that requires parliamentary approval then so it must. My main concern would be if we get a climate denying government that they could relax targets, some protection must be included to prevent this from happening.

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 and a five year period spans the parliamentary term thus hopefully invoking a greater bi-partisan approach to climate change issues.

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

I would be alarmed if any incoming government were to be able to change/alter the 'last emissions budget' particularly to suit their own ideological constituency. If the Climate Change Commission found on the other hand, that conditions had changed, then a proposal might be put to parliament for approval. I am now concerned that a climate denying government might weaken the Climate Change Commission for their own advantage. What protections will be put in place for that not to occur?

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

But my concerns are expressed as above (Q6). Changes should not be at the whim of an incoming government with short term economic goals that benefit the few. The Climate Change Commission may provide evidence based research that requires adjustment to the 'second emissions budget' which requires approval of Parliament. Again real concerns arise that that targets are weakened by such a government, I would like to see discussion that would address this critical issue.

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

I agree with the list provided in "Our Climate Your Say" p44 but have further elements that I would like considered with respect to this. The Zero Carbon Bill needs to be transparent. The bill must include a requirement to produce annual reports about New Zealand's International climate change contributions. Reference to Pacific countries must also be supported as they need to plan to adapt to their changing environment. Transparency in the Bill will promote public engagement and political accountability. New Zealanders will be able to understand the international contributions we are making and as a nation, we will be able to stand tall that we are also supporting our Pacific neighbours adapt to their climate change reality. Social circumstances and, in particular, the likely impact of the decision on fuel poverty Fiscal circumstances and, in particular, the likely impact of the decision on taxation, public spending and public borrowing Economic circumstances and, in particular, the likely impact of the decision on the economy and the competitiveness of particular sectors of the economy Access to climate finance is a matter of climate justice - those who have contributed least to the causes of climate change are typically the most vulnerable to its impacts and have the least resources to respond, both here in New Zealand and throughout the Pacific. After more than 30 years of neo-liberalism large sectors of our society live in or close to poverty conditions. Any social policies must take this into consideration and fair and balanced policy needs to be developed with wide consultation and transparency. The Zero Carbon Bill needs to support the most vulnerabe both here and in the Pacific. Technology relevant to climate change Energy policy is obviously very important, as is transport and vehicle emissions. New Zealand needs to have sound research based information regarding all technologies that may mitigate climate change. By having annual reports from the Climate Change Commission all New Zealanders can be kept informed of options that would benefit the planets survival. Scientific knowledge about climate change I support Wise Response additions to scientific knowledge: i) (New) the need to preserve healthy ecosystem function for life supporting capacity, biodiversity and to provide ecosystem services. ii) (New) the need for NZ to play its genuine and just part in the international effort to stabilise the climate and to maximise the probability of successfully complying with the target limit for the wellbeing of future generations iii) (New) the need for precaution, given the level of uncertainty attached to estimates affecting the rate of GHG emissions and climate change iv) (New) the likelihood and the potential impact on climate change of any scarcity of material resources on the economy and GHG emissions, particularly that of fossil energy The four new clauses acknowledge the need for a climate that sustains healthy ecosystems because our social and economic institutions depend on them.

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

In the interests of public disclosure and transparency this is very important. Any reports should be timely with respect to setting emissions budgets and the like, from the Climate Change Commission. (within 6mths)

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

Much of my response to Question 8 would be my main consideration. But Local Government definitely comes to mind with others the government needs to work with. I would like to emphasize partnership with the Pacific region as well.

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

And in the interests of transparency and accountability all reports must be tabled in parliament.

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

Given the previous governments use of the ETS (see Q3) I have low levels of confidence in an ETS. I also don't feel qualified to discuss other options, but I do expect the Climate Change Commission to review the options available and put before the public through the parliamentary process a range of viable systems. There must be better systems than the ETS as it stands.

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 would also include ethical considerations to that list. I am not entirely sure what "business competitiveness" has to do with anything?

Clause

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

Position

Yes

Notes

We are going to need all the help we can get adapting to climate change. Parts of the city in which I live are going to require significant intervention. How the government of the day deals with these changes needs to be clear, including fiscal aspects of the need to adapt, who pays is going to be critical. I am also concerned about our role within the Pacific Region, and effects of adaptation to climate change on our closest neighbours needs to be included in the Bill.

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, emphatically. All four of those proposed are excellent. Also reaffirm all reports are tabled in parliament. • a national climate change risk assessment • a national adaptation plan • regular review of progress towards implementing the national adaptation plan • an adaptation reporting power.

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

Clearly this is necessary once a national climate change risk assessment is completed, and Local Body Government needs to be closely involved in this process. A Central Government / Local Government / Regional Council sharing of information and resources is essential if the effects of climate change are going to be managed effectively, and in the interests of all citizens.