

Your submission to Zero Carbon Bill

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Clause

1. What process should the Government use to set a new emissions reduction target in legislation?

Notes

The Government sets a 2030 target in legislation now. The target must have ongoing goals, measurement and progress reports. Failure to achieve must be met with funding adequate to achieve and maintain progress. Funding for administration, monitoring, enforcement must be adequate and increased as required by the Commission.

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

Sadly the necessity of meeting vital emissions reduction goals is already too long delayed. Both options 1 & 2 leave too much 'wiggle room'. The consequences of non compliance are too dire to allow more stalling.

Clause

3. How should New Zealand meet its targets?

Position

Domestic emissions reductions only (including from new forest planting)

Notes

The last government was happy to use bogus credits from Eastern Europe. They burned that option by doing so. NZ needs to be a leader in developing a sustainable economy. Paying others to adopt sustainable energy economies is just plain stupid. We need to face up to the challenge and develop NZ to survive and thrive in our more challenging energy and climate environment.

Clause

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

Position

No

Notes

This will just be another opportunity for the greedy deniers to undermine what we must do to meet our obligations to the world and future generations.

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

But only with well funded monitoring, reporting, enforcement and quick action to maintain momentum. Goals cannot be allowed to be achieved in the last year, they must be achieved fairly equally across the term. Monitoring and reporting must be at least annually. Where goals are not met enforcement action with consequences/penalties/remediation must be applied within a few months and lead to up to goal compliance.

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

Aggressive but realistic emissions budgets must be set from the outset. Adjustments to achieve goals sooner to be allowed. Adjustments to weaken goals not permitted. Allowing each government to review budgets will lead to back sliding.

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

Notes

See answer above.

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

Notes

In general yes. The following from the document raise concerns: "economic circumstances and, in particular, the likely impact of the decision on the economy and the competitiveness of particular sectors of the economy" This is a big loophole. Should producers in other countries decide not to care this will be used as an excuse for our not caring. This too could lead to compliance avoidance: "fiscal circumstances and, in particular, the likely impact of the decision on taxation, public spending and public borrowing" Rather than going on citing these obvious concerns I offer that all such efforts be held to comparison with the worst case outcomes, social, economic, environmental, political that non compliance may lead to. Comparing the impacts of a change to the current economy is the wrong comparison. Considering the possible future impacts of non compliance is key for assessing our responses. Arguing that NZ is too small, has a minimal contribution to climate impacts simply encourages non compliance by all who might try to make such claims.

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

The Commission would need to have say here to be sure that political concerns do not undermine the effort either through stalling, inadequate or ineffective plans designed to implement the letter but not the spirit of the law or through other attempts to circumvent the Act.

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

A carbon tax with rebates to all is a more effective approach than the ETS. Consumers and producers alike are rewarded for making low impact decisions. When assessing costs the likely \$60 billion + losses of real estate and infrastructure to sea level rise and greater frequency of extreme weather events along with the likely greater costs of having to build anew must be calculated. Add to that the impacts on the productive economy from lost production of good and to agriculture along with the debilitating social impacts. We will need to work with everyone and this is problematic. Many in the business, political and media communities have chosen denial of the consequences or argue that there is no effective response. These people will need to be included, but cannot be allowed to continue to succeed with their obstructionism. Engaging the science and conservation communities will be easier and more productive. Creating an atmosphere where they can educate others to acknowledge the risks and remediation will be crucial. Over reliance on technological fixes will be a hazard. Carbon sequestration is not yet proved for long term security nor is it cost effective. Animal feed which reduces methane production is a worthy goal, but not one which can be relied upon. The impacts of extreme weather events will need to be calculated. Droughts leading to fires will greatly increase our emissions. Floods will also increase emissions. Both will hurt agricultural production and require more food imports further increasing emissions. All of these contributors will prove a handbrake on achieving our reduction goals and must be calculated for. We have pretended that the problem is not real, that we can close our eyes to it to make it go away for far too long.

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, and more. The Commission must have decision making power and require a 75% Parliamentary majority to be checked or the Act amended. It must have enforcement power and the budget to implement it. Penalties must far exceed the value of non compliance. For too many only the spectre of bankruptcy and/or prison should they be caught out will be enough. While I can understand the Productivity Commissions concerns it fails to fully credit the dire consequences from inaction. It also fails to acknowledge that governments in NZ and overseas have fallen far short of an appropriate response lest they anger constituencies. For this reason the Commission will need to have wide ranging powers not checked by those who would seek to obstruct. This is not an ideal outcome in a democracy. It is also what our leaders pandering to the status quo have left to us. The Commission will need to be representative while also empaneling those who will seek to further its mission, not those who will sabotage it.

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

Makes decisions itself in respect of the number of units available in the NZ ETS

Notes

The limiting of options here is not helpful. The ETS is bankrupt as too easily cheated on. Some extremely limited role for it in the future may be required. Please acknowledge the benefits of a carbon tax with a portion of the tax rebated to consumers. The costs of carbon need to be re-internalized to those producing the good or service which creates it. With the tax collected at source the costs are passed on to those consumers who make that choice. Include the carbon costs of tourism, agriculture, air travel, etc. There are only so many trees which can be planted and no proven large scale carbon technologies.

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

It is not clear that scientific expertise in the environment and its systems will be well represented, or present at all. We are trying to save the world. Including those who actually have the expertise to evaluate the potential of methods, approaches and goals to limit impacts to achieve that goal is clearly required. Public Health impacts of climate change loom large. Having a strong public health presence can remind us all of the very real risks and deaths being created by climate change. Community engagement is mentioned, but including actual community leaders is not. Where are the spiritual or philosophical leaders? Survival has more than a mere economic or social impact or value. Based on this consultative process and its limiting of responses by setting in place as given mechanisms such as the ETS the commitment to real engagement is questionable.

Clause

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

Position

Yes

Notes

The costs and consequences of adapting to climate change needs to be made a public issue, one which can assist in helping people to understand the importance of the Commissions work. The bill could formalize the role of the Climate Change Adaptation Technical Working Group to plan for and implement our responses. A much needed first step is to clearly identify those areas which are likely to be impacted and not this on LIM's. Work with insurers to identify the increased costs and possibility of lack of insurability. Make it clear that government will be restricting development and redevelopment in impacted areas.

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

Formalize, fund and empower the Climate Change Adaptation Technical Working Group and the requirement for a national climate change risk assessment to be reported annually. This can feed in to the Commission and inform their enforcement efforts and changes required to achieve goals.

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

see above