Your submission to Zero Carbon Bill

Kay Ann Robertson

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<td>1. What process should the Government use to set a new emissions reduction target in legislation?</td>
<td>The Government sets a 2050 target in legislation now</td>
<td>I feel 2050 is too late. We need to act faster than that. We've procrastinated for decades, so now even more drastic measures are required. We've already passed tipping points. This is the single most important challenge facing us and if we don't act we're looking at nothing less than mass extinction, including our own species. We need STRONG legislation NOW so it's harder for a future government to water it down.</td>
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<td>2. If the Government sets a 2050 target now, which is the best target for New Zealand?</td>
<td>Net Zero Long-Lived Gases and Stabilised Short-Lived Gases - Long-lived gases to net zero by 2050 while also stabilising short-lived gases</td>
<td>My understanding is that NZ's biggest emissions are from transport and agriculture (as we have a small manufacturing sector compared to other countries). Reducing CO2 and NO emissions will involve changes in both sectors. Also we need to stabilise short-lived gases at a MUCH LOWER level than where they are at currently. People have the idea that short-lived gases aren't a big deal as it's sort of a 'closed loop' or biological cycle, but methane does a lot of damage whilst it's there, so we need to reduce our output to a much lower level.</td>
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<td>3. How should New Zealand meet its targets?</td>
<td>Domestic emissions reductions only (including from new forest planting)</td>
<td>I think NZ really needs to take responsibility for dealing with our own emissions and set goals to reduce and offset domestically. We have benefited by the carbon-intensive economy of the last few decades and now we must do our part. Also, to do otherwise would again be procrastinating and waffling instead of making the tough decisions that we much make to transition to a zero-carbon economy and society. This is our future, we best get started on it; the longer we delay the harder and more expensive it will be. I would like to make an exception for aiding our neighbours in the Pacific, if our purchase of their carbon units would help them to also transition to zero-carbon alternatives.</td>
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<td>4. Should the Zero Carbon Bill allow the 2050 target to be revised if circumstances change?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>But only to tighten emission limits or reduce time-frames, i.e. loosing or easing the targets and time-frames should not be allowed.</td>
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<td>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?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>We need to do this faster, really we should be aiming for 2030. Instead of 3 budgets of 5 years each, I would prefer 5 budgets of 3 years each plus annual intermediate goals. As one 3 year budget expires, the government of the day would then set the next one that starts 12 years in the future. This binds future governments (of whatever makeup) to making decisions beyond the next election, but would hasten the whole process.</td>
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Clause 6. Should the Government be able to alter the last emissions budget (i.e. furthest into the future)?

Notes
I don't really understand the second option. It sounds like they could review the third one when they create the fourth one. I think it would need to go back to the Commission for their view (have circumstances altered enough to justify a change) and then if the government wanted to make changes that differed from the Commissions recommendations, they would have to explain and justify that.

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

Notes
Again, I would say this should be reviewed by the Commission. As someone from Christchurch, the earthquakes were an opportunity to rebuild in a more sustainable manner. Unfortunately this opportunity was largely squandered by the previous Government. So I would say that a natural disaster situation should not be used as an excuse to alter the targets, but rather, the emission budgets would drive the government of the day to make better decisions than they would if the targets were relaxed.

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
I agree with all of them and would also want to include concepts like inter-generational fairness and fairness vis-a-vis our Pacific neighbours.

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
They should be strict timeframes emphasising earlier reductions rather than later. By that I mean, we don't want to wait until the 2040s and then have drastic reductions then. This would both damage the economy and reducing our emission early will reduce our contribution to the climate change problem. Earlier, bigger reductions are better.

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
-We need to work with and enable local governments to achieve these goals. -We need to consider the embedded emission of what we import, e.g. EV vehicles vs public transport. EVs are still individuals driving separate vehicles and will necessitate more roading and encourage suburban sprawl. Public transport drives more efficient urban design and transport costs.

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
I prefer the middle option, that the Commission is “Advisory, with mechanisms built in to hold Government to account. Government must publicly respond to, and provide rationale when it deviates from, the Commission’s advice.” I don’t want the government to be able to ignore the Commission and shove their recommendations in a drawer. The government must explain and justify why it’s not following the advice.

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
The Commission should advise and monitor and hold the government to account, but not make the decisions. The government needs to decide how to implement the Commission’s recommendations and has to explain any deviations.
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 with the proposed expertise, but would also add in 1) public health and 2) non-experts, lay-people from affected communities such as Pacifica.

Clause
14. Do you think the Zero Carbon Bill should cover adapting to climate change?
Position
Yes
Notes
Adaptation will be a big part of the challenge we face.

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
Excellent!

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
Definitely!

Clause
Do you have any other comments you'd like to make?
Notes
Just restating what I said in Question 1: This is the single most important challenge facing us and if we don't act we're looking at nothing less than mass extinction, including our own species. Ever heard of the Permian extinction - the greatest mass extinction in Earth's history? Scientists think the Earth warmed 5 degrees, then this set off a series of feedback loops that raised the temperature another 5 degrees. Almost ALL life died. There's a great BBC doco called 'The Day the Earth Nearly Died'. We're creating round 2 right now and we need to drastically change course.