

Your submission to Zero Carbon Bill

Te Pūtahi / FESTA (Jessica Halliday)

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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 government should set the target in law now, with the ability to make the target stronger in response to the Commission's early advice. The target should be based on the most up to date climate science, on our international obligations and on principles of global equity (New Zealand is a wealthy, high emitting country and should do its fair share).

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

Methane must be included as well as carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide. I also support taking a science-based approach to ensure our efforts to reduce emissions are as impactful as possible: we should aim for negative levels of long-lived gases, while reducing short-lived gases to sustainable levels. The emissions from transport, industrial activity, agriculture, and all other sources should be included in the target. Even 'short-lived' gasses can have a huge effect on our climate and need to be reduced. I support a 1.5°C net zero emissions target for 2040. This is because in terms of global urgency, the health gains from equitable mitigation, and especially fairness, the current target needs to be more ambitious, before 2040.

Clause

3. How should New Zealand meet its targets?

Position

Domestic emissions reductions only (including from new forest planting)

Notes

including reforestation, horticultural planting and improved soil health

Clause

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

Position

No

Notes

The target can only be changed by changing the Act. Under no circumstances should the 2050 target should not be altered in response to "economic changes" as this undermines its long-term certainty and effectiveness.

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

These budgets should be set by the Climate Commission by considering: - scientific knowledge about climate change, sea level rise and ocean acidification - obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi - global leadership and international fairness

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 - emissions budgets should not be altered in response to "economic changes" as this undermines their long-term certainty. While any Government can act so NZ emits less than budgeted, emissions budgets should be able to be increased only by changing this law

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**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

The physics of climate change comes first for setting Emissions Budgets - the bottom line is what ends up in our shared global atmosphere and oceans, and making sure ecological tipping points are not breached. As the impacts of unmitigated climate change will be highly regressive on New Zealanders the priority must be robust emissions budgets. The Climate Commission's Emissions Budgets must be consistent with the best possible chance of limiting global warming to 1.5°C degrees and the greater responsibility of well-resourced nations like NZ, with Budget considerations limited to: A. Scientific knowledge about climate change, sea level rise and ocean acidification B. Obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi C. Global leadership, including international equity¹⁹ The Commission then advises the Government on mitigation policies (including ETS settings) for the Government plans to keep NZ's future emissions within the Commission's budgets. Te Tiriti O Waitangi obligations and fairness within New Zealand are top priorities for policy and planning. Other considerations include substantial health co-benefits and technology relevant to climate change - in ensuring a fairer, just, sustainable Aotearoa-NZ.

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

We must learn from the mistakes of the UK's Climate Change Act. The Zero Carbon Act must require the Government to respond by publishing plans to stay within budget as rapidly as feasible within a set time limit that is certainly less than 12 months.

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

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. This means health equity is essential in planning and monitoring - all regressive policies (including ETS settings) must be effectively offset for vulnerable communities. The substantial co-benefits to health²¹ from well-designed reduction and mitigation must be considered. Other considerations include sustainable economic opportunities and technology relevant to climate change, to grow a fairer, just, sustainable Aotearoa-NZ. The Government must work in Te Tiriti partnership, and with NZ's most vulnerable communities (those already disadvantaged and those working in high-emissions industries), to create a hopeful, fairer future.

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 - the Commission should not be a decision-making body. But also the Commission must set NZ's Emissions Budgets - like the Reserve Bank independently sets NZ's Official Cash Rate. The Commission can also advise how NZ stays within these budgets, how NZ can best adapt to climate change, and monitor progress on NZ's emissions reductions. The Government should be legally required to consider and formally respond to the Commission's advice, and to provide an explanation if they do not act on it. It is also crucial that the Commission's advice is transparent. Just like the UK Climate Commission, the NZ Commission's advice should be released to all NZers, media and the government at the same time. The Government should not receive nor get advice on Emissions Budgets in advance of their public release. This will allow NZers to also hold government to account, and prevent governments from interfering or otherwise unduly influencing the Commission's independent and official 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 the Government on ETS policy settings so that New Zealand emits within budget. It should not make decisions itself with respect to the number of units available in the NZ ETS, or its implementation.

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 following collective expertise: • climate change policy (including emissions trading) • resource economics and impacts (including social impacts, labour markets and distribution) • te Tiriti o Waitangi, te reo me ona tikanga Māori and Māori interests • climate and environmental science including mātauranga Māori • experience with addressing adaptation challenges like planning, insurance and local government • risk management • engineering and/or infrastructure • community engagement and communications. • business competitiveness • knowledge of the public and private innovation and technology development system. I think expertise in public health is also important and health expertise amongst Commissioners and staffing is needed too. It is also essential that the Commission is founded on partnership with tāngata whenua and upholds obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Clause

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

Position

Yes

Notes

Yes. This may require a separate adaptation sub-committee within the Climate Commission as adaptation must be a separate advisory work stream, to avoid overtaking the Commission's top priority climate mitigation role.

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 the proposed functions below, but recognise that nuance is required in terms of how local councils are involved: • a national climate change risk assessment • a national adaptation plan • regular review of progress towards implementing the national adaptation plan • an adaptation reporting power Mitigation and adaptation are often deeply interlinked - so often mitigation and adaptation can be addressed together in the same policy (e.g. housing). But care must be taken in designing adaptation policies to ensure that climate-damaging emissions are not increased. Adaptation must be dealt with by a separate working group, to avoid distraction from the top priority of mitigation. A health adaptation plan must be put in place that covers both health sector adaptation and health-protecting adaptation in other sectors

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**Clause**

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

Notes

Thank you for writing this Bill and preparing extensive consultation documents and public events. It is the most important Bill this Government will pass. The transparency and independence of the Commission is vital to the success of addressing NZ's GHG emissions in a fair and just way.