

Your submission to Zero Carbon Bill

Reference no: 11342

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

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

I support taking a two baskets approach to reach preferably negative emissions caused by long-lived gas emissions and the reduction of short-lived to sustainable levels. I advocate that the sustainable levels of short-lived gases is determined by science and not vested interests (or outdated economists). I advocate that the sustainable level is determined by scientists from all fields of science affected by climate change (climate, soil, water, atmosphere, food security). Reducing methane to a sustainable level is vital. Scientists reiterate that we dance dangerously close to a tipping point that could see run-away melting in permafrosts and Antarctic ice sheets. The consequences of which would be devastating to wildlife, economies, infrastructure and human beings (food security, mass migration, sea level rise). Avoiding the rapid reduction of methane is like playing Russian Roulette with our life-enabling planetary conditions – is this really a game we want to play? I would personally find a win-win game far less anxiety inducing. Long-lived GHG (such as carbon and nitrous oxide) should at minimum be reduced to zero, and the goal should be to reach negative emissions. Our economy should be re-designed as a regenerative economy that gives back to the natural environmental systems that sustain us.

Clause

3. How should New Zealand meet its targets?

Position

Domestic emissions reductions only (including from new forest planting)

Notes

A gross reduction target should be set to ensure an ambitious minimum amount of reductions occur in NZ across multiple industries. The gross reduction target should ensure that it is no longer a viable financial option to continue investing in GHG emitting activities. The net target should focus primarily on domestic reductions – the 'Firewall principal' advocated by Generation Zero will ensure our own zero carbon transition is on track. Priority of support should be given to NZU's that are verified to ensure Sustainable Development Goals such as land and water quality, equality, and community development. Emissions that cannot be met after the gross reduction target and NZU's have been purchased – should prioritise projects that occur in our Pacific region (ensuring their economic transition) and these projects should meet the same Sustainable Development Goals we advocate for in NZ.

Clause

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

Position

No

Notes

The 2050 target should only be revised in exceptional circumstances. A clear, legally binding target is the cornerstone of the Zero Carbon Act framework. If the target can be easily changed for politically expedient reasons, this will undermine much of the framework's value. Two situations where it would be clearly appropriate to change the 2050 target are: • A significant change in scientific knowledge relating to climate change. • A significant change in international law (for example, the Paris Agreement becoming more ambitious). It is important not to create a political environment where it is easy to review budgets. We need to build the certainty that will create ambitious investment, innovation, business leadership. We also need the government to realise the urgency for putting in place transitional support networks that will ensure a fair and just transition. Any revision to the budget must be reviewed and signed off as necessary by the parliamentary commission to avoid a government passing the buck to the successive government. Money required in aid of natural disasters caused by the effects of climate change should not be seen as a reason to avoid set budgets. Economic changes such as reduced GDP would not be a valid reason for revision.

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

The budgets should be at a level recommended by the Climate Commission and approved by Parliament. These budgets should ensure cross-party cooperation for long term investment projects that will ensure a fast and ambitious transition to a low carbon economy. It is crucial to not just focus on easy and inexpensive changes that can be made quickly, but rather to also pay attention and allocate parts of the budgets to long-term strategies. This will avoid even higher costs in the future and maximise benefits for the country.

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. As mentioned above, budgets should only be revised in exceptional circumstances. It is not appropriate for a new government to "have a say" on an upcoming budget which has already been set. This would create too much uncertainty and instability as we swing between right and left governments.

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

There are few exceptional circumstances under which it may be appropriate to change an upcoming budget, e.g. following a severe natural disaster such as a major earthquake or volcanic eruption. Revising a budget in this situation would not necessitate changing the long-term 2050 target unless, of course, the emission budget being revised is that which concludes at 2050. Any revision to an emissions budget should require the Government to take into account advice from the Climate Change Commission, and obtain Parliamentary approval.

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 that most of the things listed should be taken into account: • scientific knowledge about climate change • technology relevant to climate change • 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 • energy policy and, in particular, the likely impact of the decision on energy supplies and the carbon and energy intensity of the economy • the government's obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi • the three government objectives for climate change policy: sustainable economy, global and local leadership and creating a just and inclusive society I do not agree that this point should be a priority: • economic circumstances and, in particular, the likely impact of the decision on the economy and the competitiveness of particular sectors of the economy If priority is given to this consideration based on the 'old economic theories' we risk not making the ambitious changes that will see us situate ourselves as leaders of a new low-carbon economy. Vested interests have already held back investment and change for too long. It is time for these economic considerations to take a back seat to the survival of planetary systems and the wellbeing and equality of people.

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

To reference Generation Zero's submission point: A notable weakness of the UK Climate Change Act is that it does not set clear timeframes for the Government to make policy plans to meet future emission budgets. Generation Zero supports the Zero Carbon Act introducing a strict time frame of 6 months to publish policy plans after setting an emission budget.

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

Again quoting Generation Zero's submission point: 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. For a detailed explanation of these principles, see Part I: Zero Carbon Act framework.

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. I support the Climate Commission having two functions (a) providing expert advice, and (b) monitoring our progress and holding the government to account. The Commission should not be a decision-making body in the first case, because of issues of democratic accountability and the risk that they would be a less-effective watch dog if they had decision making capabilities that only had to self-monitor. To ensure transparency and accountability, the Government must table all its reports in Parliament. However, the climate commission should not only be a weak advisory body, but rather have some powers to hold governments that are not meeting their commitments to account. Should it become evident after the first two budget terms (10 years) that the commission's advise is not being followed, a review would be appropriate to give the commission decision making powers.

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**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 Generation Zero's submission point that missing from this proposed list is expertise in public health. A further consideration is that, if adaptation is included in the Zero Carbon Act (see Q14), it will be important to think carefully about how many Commissioners should have adaptation-specific expertise. It might be a good idea to have a separate committee which focuses on adaptation issues, as is the case in the UK.

Clause

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

Position

Yes

Notes

Quoting Generation Zero's submission: Including an adaptation framework in the Zero Carbon Act will also mean that New Zealand's response to the impacts of climate change is developed in accordance with the same principles (fairness, cost-effectiveness, comprehensiveness, environmental sustainability, and a commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi) and in pursuance of the same outcomes (long-term certainty, policy coherence, expertise, transparency, and accountability) as our mitigation strategy. This is consistent with the Zero Carbon Act's overarching objective of facilitating New Zealand's transition to a resilient, zero carbon economy. Te Tiriti o Waitangi must be a central pillar of our adaptation response. We agree with the Technical Working Group that early and meaningful engagement with iwi and hapūb is essential to the overall effectiveness of the framework.

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 Generation Zero's submission point that supports the government being required to prepare a national climate risk assessment, and a national policy plan to address these risks. A monitoring and reporting framework is also important. We need to think carefully about how local councils should be involved in these processes.

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

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