

# Your submission to Zero Carbon Bill

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## Reference no: 11626

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

Of the presented options I support the most ambitious target possible: reducing total greenhouse gases to net zero by 2050. However, The goal of net carbon zero by 2050 is not ambitious enough. 2050 is too far away to protect us from the worst of the changes to come. The goal should more ambitious, by 2040, or 2035, and should be modifiable to call for more urgent action each time an Assessment Report is published by the IPCC (next Assessment Report due 2022).

### 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

Of the presented options I support the most ambitious target possible, net zero emissions across all greenhouse gases by 2050. However, net carbon zero emissions doesn't quite go far enough, as there is already way to much CO2 and CO2EQ in the atmosphere. The goal should be earliest possible Drawdown, which is the point in time when the concentration of atmospheric greenhouse gasses begins to decline on a year-to-year basis. (ref Project Drawdown <http://drawdown.org>)

### Clause

3. How should New Zealand meet its targets?

### Position

Domestic emissions reductions only (including from new forest planting)

### Notes

By using domestic emissions reductions only (and with a strong emphasis on offsetting from reforestation and new forest planting). Within this, full consideration should be given to the full range of ecosystems benefits that native (re)forestation offers, compared with the more two dimensional benefits to be had from cash crop timber planting. Absolutely no dependence on reductions from overseas.

### Clause

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

### Position

Yes

### Notes

As I mentioned in my responses to questions one and two, the goal of net carbon zero by 2050 is neither urgent enough nor ambitious enough. The goal should be open to modification only to call for more urgent or comprehensive action when the available data and expertise supports this course of action e.g. each time an Assessment Report is published by the IPCC (next Assessment Report due 2022). The target should not be allowed to be changed to a goal of lesser scope or ambition (there is no scientific evidence to suggest that this happy eventuality will be called for in any of the likely circumstances ahead of us).

### 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 - I agree with 5-year budgets set 10-15 years in advance, so that 3 are in effect at all times.

### Clause

6. Should the Government be able to alter the last emissions budget (i.e. furthest into the future)?

### Notes

Emissions budgets should not be altered in response to “economic changes” as this undermines their long-term certainty, or to reduce their scope or ambition. However, the ability to revise budgets in light of major changes in scientific understanding or international agreements should be permitted.

**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**

Yes, but... I would like to see the economic circumstances consideration de-emphasised, and given lesser weighting than the others suggested, on the grounds that there is no point in continuing with activities that, while economically advantageous or competitive, have far-reaching negative climate-related consequences, and as such are damaging to society - “economic circumstances and, in particular, the likely impact of the decision on the economy and the competitiveness of particular sectors of the economy”

**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**

With the proviso that I would like to see the economic circumstances consideration de-emphasised, and given lesser weighting than the others suggested, on the grounds that there is no point in continuing with activities that, while economically competitive, has far-reaching negative climate-related consequences, and as such are damaging to society - “economic circumstances and, in particular, the likely impact of the decision on the economy and the competitiveness of particular sectors of the economy”

**Clause**

9. Should the Zero Carbon Bill require Governments to set out plans within a certain timeframe to achieve the emissions budgets?

**Notes**

Yes - we should take the lessons learned from the mistakes of the UK's Climate Change Act and specify a strict time frame for producing a plan.

**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. While important, considerations of economic wellbeing, especially those of any one particular business or economic sector, cannot be given primacy over environmental and societal wellbeing. This gist of this is best expressed for me by this quote: “Only when the last tree has been cut down, the last fish been caught, and the last stream poisoned, will we realise we cannot eat money.”

**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**

Of the two options presented, yes, I do agree with these functions. Additionally, provision should be made for expanding the scope or the remit of the commission in future, for example in response to non-compliance or non-delivery of results by governments, local authorities, companies or any other bodies or individuals, or based on new scientific as it comes available e.g. each time an Assessment Report is published by the IPCC (next Assessment Report due 2022). The Commerce Commission could provide a useful model or template e.g this is from their website: <http://www.comcom.govt.nz/the-commission/about-us/> The Commerce Commission is New Zealand's primary competition regulatory agency. We enforce legislation that promotes competition in New Zealand markets and prohibits misleading and deceptive conduct by traders. The Commission also enforces a number of pieces of legislation that, through regulation, aim to provide the benefits of competition in markets where effective competition does not exist. This includes in the telecommunications, dairy, electricity, gas pipelines and airport sectors. The Commission is an independent Crown entity established under section 8 of the Commerce Act 1986. The Commission is not subject to direction from the government in carrying out its enforcement and regulatory control activities. The Commerce Commission's purpose is to achieve the best possible outcomes in competitive and regulated markets for the long-term benefit of New Zealanders.

**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**

**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 the proposed range of essential and desirable expertise. In addition I propose another essential role or position in the commission - one analogous to Hungary's Parliamentary Commissioner for Future Generations. This role existed from 2008-2012. Although this role has since been subsumed into a wider role, the Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights (ref: <http://jno.hu/en/?menu=home>), in it's day set a fantastic precedent for how the interests of future generations can be explicitly represented in present-day government systems. I request that such a role be established and mandatory within the makeup of the proposed Climate Commission, to counterbalance the weighting given to the material benefits of present generations that will inevitably happen as part of the commission's normal functioning. I also think expertise in public health is important. In addition, the interests of our Pacific Island neighbours should be represented by a role in the commission, perhaps like an ambassador. More on this in my adaptation answers.

**Clause**

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

**Position**

Yes

**Notes**

Yes. This could be managed by a separate adaptation sub-committee within the Climate Commission. As well as considering domestic impacts and adaption strategies, the bill should also specify considering our Pacific Island neighbours in all future adaptation planning and action.

**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

**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**

Yes. At a minimum all public and public owned organisations, plus any privately owned businesses or other organisations that provide services or functions that can reasonably be considered as vital or essential to the ongoing proper functioning of the country e.g. food, health, transport, power, education etc.

**Clause**

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

**Notes**

Yes, thank you. I'd like to bring your attention to the 2009 Worldwatch Institute report (<http://www.worldwatch.org/worldwatch-institute-annual-report-2009-2010>). Within it is this paragraph: "Surface carbon moves from the atmosphere to the land and back, and in this process it drives the engine of life on the planet" and it concludes that our task now is restoring the "harmonious movement of carbon" . I believe that within this idea is way to recast agriculture in NZ as a huge contributor to the solutions we need for a zero carbon NZ, and not just, as they are sometimes portrayed, the largest contributor to the problem in the country at the moment.