

Your submission to Zero Carbon Bill

Reference no: 11659

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

It is imperative that we act now and put in place a clear target now so we can act on climate change now

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

Emissions are what is causing climate change so that is what must be reduced to net zero. I support an overall target of net zero across all gases by 2050. We need to reduce all greenhouse gases, including methane.

Clause

3. How should New Zealand meet its targets?

Position

Domestic emissions reductions only (including from new forest planting)

Notes

I support the most ambitious target of reducing total greenhouse gases to net zero by 2050. 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. This target should be reached by reducing our own emissions and not by using international carbon credits.

Clause

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

Position

Yes

Notes

The 2050 target should only be revised in exceptional circumstances. The purpose of the Zero Carbon Act is to provide accountability, certainty and flexibility. It will provide accountability and certainty by setting clear, legally-binding emission reduction targets. It will retain flexibility by permitting different governments to use different policies to meet these targets, in response to changing circumstances and new technology. Despite the importance of accountability and certainty, there are some situations where it is appropriate to change the 2050 target. Only in exceptional conditions where the target can become more ambitious should the government change the target. There should be safeguards to only increase the target to reduce New Zealand's emissions further. For example, making the target more ambitious should only be considered if say the Paris Climate Agreement becomes more ambitious. I do not support being able to revise the 2050 target in response to "economic changes". This would create uncertainty, which means more economic instability, rather than less.

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

I support this. Legally-binding budgets, set 10-15 years in advance so that 3 budgets are in effect at all times, at a level recommended by the Climate Commission and approved by Parliament, are essential to the success of the Zero Carbon Act.

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. 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. What a new government can do is introduce different policies to meet the upcoming target. Climate change is not a political football that can be kicked around. Our lives, our homes, our land and our children’s futures are facing catastrophic disaster and this budget should not be changed depending on the government of the day.

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

Under exceptional circumstances, yes. For example, it might be appropriate to change an upcoming budget after an extreme natural disaster (such as a major earthquake). Revising a budget in this situation would not mean changing the long-term 2050 target. To provide maximum certainty and accountability, budgets should not be revised unless the circumstances are exceptional.

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 generally agree with the proposed list of considerations to take into account when setting emission budgets: 1. scientific knowledge about climate change 2. technology relevant to climate change 3. economic circumstances and, in particular, the likely impact of the decision on the economy and the competitiveness of particular sectors of the economy 4. fiscal circumstances and, in particular, the likely impact of the decision on taxation, public spending and public borrowing 5. social circumstances and, in particular, the likely impact of the decision on fuel poverty 6. energy policy and, in particular, the likely impact of the decision on energy supplies and the carbon and energy intensity of the economy 7. the government’s obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi 8. the three government objectives for climate change policy: sustainable economy, global and local leadership and creating a just and inclusive society

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

I support the Zero Carbon Act having a strict time frame for setting out policy plans. This time frame should be 6 months after an emission budget has been set.

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. Zero Carbon Act principles are explained as: Fairness means giving effect to equity considerations, such as intergenerational justice and the principles of a “just transition”. In practice, this means ensuring that vulnerable communities are supported, that there is a just transition for workers in industries where job losses will occur, and that clear signals are given as early as possible to enable communities and businesses to plan for the impact and opportunities of emission reduction policies (as well as the effects of climate change, such as sea level rise). Cost-effectiveness means adopting long-term strategies which minimise cost and maximise benefits for New Zealand. In particular, this means setting targets and plans that avoid passing the cost of transition to young and future generations. Comprehensiveness means taking an economy-wide approach to New Zealand’s emission reduction strategy. The strategy must encompass all sectors, drive coordinated decision-making and analysis across government, and be sufficiently funded and resourced. Environmental sustainability means considering the holistic environmental impact of climate change policies, not only the extent of greenhouse gas reductions.

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, for the following reasons: Democratic accountability. Elected officials should be ultimately responsible for making plans and meeting Zero Carbon Act targets. If they mess up, we vote them out. The Commission, in contrast, is not democratically elected or accountable to the public. Similarly, the

government should not be able to 'pass the buck' on difficult decisions to the Commission. The Commission should provide expert advice, but it is the government that must take responsibility. Compromised watchdog: A Commission with decision-making powers will be a less effective watchdog. It would have a conflict of interest in holding itself to account over its own policy decisions. Comprehensive policy plans: Transitioning to a zero carbon economy will require comprehensive and coordinated policies across all sectors of the economy. The government needs to assume overall responsibility for these plans. Delegating some decision-making powers to the Commission (such as ETS settings, see Q12) risks these policies being made without properly coordinating with policies elsewhere.

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 Climate Commission should only advise on ETS settings, it should not make final decisions.

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 generally agree with the proposed list of expertise which should be collectively held by the Climate Commission: 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. Desirable, but non-essential, expertise could include: business competitiveness knowledge of the public and private innovation and technology development system.

Clause

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

Position

Yes

Notes

Yes. I support the inclusion of adaptation (this means addressing the impacts of climate change, such as droughts and sea level rise) in the Zero Carbon Act. The Climate Commission should contribute its expertise to our adaptation response.

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

Yes. I support 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

Yes. I support exploring this option in more detail.

Clause

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

Notes

I want to live in an Aotearoa that acts on Climate Change and protects the country and the people that I love. Generation Zero has been a leading organisation in acting on climate change and should be consulted with on an ongoing basis regarding these matters. This bill should always adhere to the following principles: Fairness means giving effect to equity considerations, such as intergenerational justice and the principles of a "just transition". In practice, this means ensuring that vulnerable communities are supported, that there is a just transition for workers in industries where job losses will occur, and that clear signals are given as early as possible to enable communities and businesses to plan for the impact and opportunities of emission reduction policies (as well as the effects of climate change, such as sea level rise). Cost-effectiveness means adopting long-term strategies which minimise cost

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