

Your submission to Zero Carbon Bill

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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

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

Focusing on carbon dioxide to the exclusion of other greenhouse gases prioritises some industries over others. In addition, lots of short-lived gases have very high carbon dioxide equivalent values, so reducing them is a relatively easy way to reduce climate change. By 2050 we won't have the luxury of thinking in the long term because already climate change risks producing runaway effects (through ice melting, the release of methane from the permafrost, and so on).

Clause

3. How should New Zealand meet its targets?

Position

Domestic emissions reductions only (including from new forest planting)

Notes

New Zealand is a country custom-made to be able to reduce its emissions - a lot of space and natural resources, a relatively small and wealthy population, a strong connection with the environment. We should be leading the way, not relying on others to make changes we aren't willing or able to. If a worldwide emissions trading scheme develops, I would expect NZ to be a net exporter of carbon units.

Clause

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

Position

No

Notes

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

Clause

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

Position

Yes - each incoming Government should have the option to review the third budget in the sequence

Notes

But with safeguards so that future governments can't just change the targets because they decide it's too hard. Possibly significant changes would have to go to a parliamentary vote or receive agreement from a cross-party working group.

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

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

Yes, but I would also add: - consider that climate change reduction strategies can have positive as well as negative effects on the economy and society - also consider wider environmental impacts, for example the damage to fisheries and birds from tidal schemes I especially like this: 'The Commission could also consider 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**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 needs to work with business (as always) but also and especially local government and community groups. Sometimes business priorities push out community priorities and it is important that these other groups get a fair hearing.

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**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

Makes decisions itself in respect of the number of units available in the NZ ETS

Notes

An independent body would probably be better in this circumstance

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

Another desirable expertise would be social sciences as both climate change mitigation and climate change adaptation will influence and be influenced by society.

Clause

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

Position

Yes

Notes

It's too late to avoid climate change so we had better be ready to adapt to it.

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'm worried about how to get people on board (no pun intended) with adaptation. It took us years and dozens of deaths to get businesses and individuals on board with health and safety; the same thing could happen when adapting to climate change. The UK

has a slightly interesting strategy where any new building placed in a flood plain is legally required to be protected, generally by raising it off the ground. This is in part a response to the increasing number and severity of floods due to climate change. It might be worth investigating something similar along the coast, especially for infrastructure hubs (ie electrical substations, wastewater treatment and water treatment works).

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

I think you'll need compulsory reporting - it does result in more paperwork but is useful both to motivate organisations and inform the government. However, there are lots of ways nowadays to make reporting easier - online or app-based forms are a good start.

Clause

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

Notes

I'm really, really happy New Zealand is doing this.