Your submission to Zero Carbon Bill

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Submitter Type:

Clause 1. What process should the Government use to set a new emissions reduction target in legislation?
Notes
2050 is too late. 2040 at the very least

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
Short lived gases, essentially agricultural methane are up to 100 times more potent than CO2. Over 8-10 years that's a lot of warming.

Clause 3. How should New Zealand meet its targets?
Position
Domestic emissions reductions only (including from new forest planting)
Notes
see 2 in other comments below

Clause 4. Should the Zero Carbon Bill allow the 2050 target to be revised if circumstances change?
Position
Yes
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
No
Notes
Not fast enough and there needs to be some way of ensuring the budgets are met

Clause 6. Should the Government be able to alter the last emissions budget (i.e. furthest into the future)?
Notes
All budgets should be changeable as further scientific data is available

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
No
Notes
The CCC should play a considerably larger part in decision making. See 7 & 8 in other comments below

Clause 12. What role do you think the Climate Change Commission should have in relation to the New Zealand Emissions Trading Scheme (NZ ETS)?
Notes
ETSs are financial tools that do little other than allow those with money to buy their way into continuing to emit greenhouse gases.
Actual reduction is necessary.

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

Notes
See 6 in other comments below

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

Notes
Something has to.

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?

Notes
Do you mean that organisations wouldn't voluntarily share information? If so then yes.

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

Notes
Zero Carbon Bill Submission First of all I'd like to point out that compared with many other, if not all, "developed" countries, it is dead easy for NZ to reach zero carbon. It has but 4million people, a temperate, relatively amenable (for the time being) climate, an electricity sector 80% or so renewable, a population not averse to bucking the trend (nuclear free) and a new government, for the time being, that has shown itself willing to tackle climate change. Unfortunately it also has a fiscally responsible, essentially neoliberal government, an economy dependant on exports and international trade, an agricultural and transport sector that is dependant on CO2 emitting fossil fuels and a society that in the last 40 years or so has shown one of the greatest increases in disparity between the rich and the poor in the "developed" world. So there's a fair bit for a Zero Carbon Act or more pertinent, the Climate Commission, to deal with. But it's a good start and I support the idea. With the following caveats, conditions and considerations.

1. 2050 is too late. 2040 is marginal. 2030, if not earlier is necessary to meet the Paris agreements optimistic 1.5C warming target. Surely NZ signed up to this? Albeit on a voluntary basis.
2. Essentially emissions have to be reduced, not offset. Yes, planting trees is essential but short term havestable commercial forestry is not the answer and carbon credits are nothing but a trendy, acceptable form of colonisation; export of the problem to a less fortunate part of the world. If not financial skullduggery.
3. Reduction of emissions means that we have to change our economy and lifestyle. Sorry you electric car owners but one flight to Auckland for a conference or a Big Day Out undoes all the savings from a year of Leaf commuting. The Zero Carbon Act/Climate Commission must not start by assuming that we can maintain our "standard" of living while reducing our emissions. But at the same time, it must ensure that our poorer citizens are looked after. There's a lot of carbon emissions our well off, dare I say, middle class, citizens can forego poor things and stay alive and bugger all those living in the likes of South Dunedin on nigh on zero hour contracts and the benefi tittance can. Social Justice I think it's called, if you want an acceptable term rather than ill health and early death.
4. Zero carbon by 20** requires serious consideration of the re-localisation of the economy. Local food, local industry. Reduction of reliance on international trade, transport, multinational corporations, financial dealings. The reversal of the neoliberal agenda of the past 50 years has to be on the agenda.
5. So who is going to be on the Climate Commission? The body that steers NZ to Zero Carbon? Our major export earners? Fonterra - methane, coal? Tourism - aviation fuel? Federated farmers - methane, diesel? Ex National Party politicians? This is not a forum for excusing the status quo but one for coming up with the answers. Quickly Necessary are: climate scientists to remind us of and update the problem. economists (for want of a better word) to provide alternatives to the present neoliberal hegemony and the doers, those who are already part of the solution, those who have demonstrated a competence in sustainable energy, local food, electric transport etc. (Not lobby groups). We want a direct path to the future for our children and the world, not one littered with hurdles and ditches constructed by those with vested interests in the status quo.
6. So what power/influence should the Climate Commission have over Government? It is after all an unelected body. Perhaps here we should consider the role of the (unelected) Treasury and M.B.I. on government policy? The treasury has unquestionably had a role in the neoliberal stance of government and MBI has been touring the country of late promoting the old and new Trans Pacific Trade Partnership with scant regard for its relevance to the Paris agreement. Considerable power has been quietly given to or assumed by these bodies over public policy. So why not the Climate Commission? There's a precedent and the impending consequences are somewhat dire. Should the politicians in government be obliged to accept and implement the Commission's recommendations or will it be voluntary and will they only do so if they are of the climate crisis rather than climate denial persuasion or can get some electoral advantage? 8. As a pinko leftie, all too aware of the dangers of dictators yet with any remnant belief in democracy compromised by US elections, I'm wary of placing policy decisions in the hands of anyone, let alone a few appointees. However, if the Commission is so constituted as to come up with informed, well reasoned recommendations based on the latest science and research, then I think it has to have considerably more status than an advisory body. Informed opinions are our best hope.