

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

Experience over the past nine years shows that flexibility such as "the second half of the century" gives far too much opportunity for NZ to go slow rather than be resolute in taking a meaningful role in tackling climate change. Unless there are castiron guarantees of no backsliding I strongly support a target for 2050 that is net zero emissions.

Clause

2. If the Government sets a 2050 target now, which is the best target for New Zealand?

Position

Net Zero Long-Lived Gases and Stabilised Short-Lived Gases - Long-lived gases to net zero by 2050 while also stabilising short-lived gases

Notes

I would want to see net zero of long lived gases and a SUBSTANTIAL reduction of short lived gases. It is unacceptable for methane to be given a soft option when it is so dominant in our national profile and when there are real possibilities for its reduction. I'm not anti-agriculture but I believe we have gone much too far to enable massive methane production. Time to rebalance significantly.

Clause

3. How should New Zealand meet its targets?

Position

Domestic emissions reductions (including from new forest planting) and using some emissions reductions from overseas (international carbon units) that have strong environmental safeguards

Notes

The vast majority of our efforts must be domestic. Our development assistance can certainly contribute to our efforts but previous actions to buy "legal" but worthless credits makes me very cautious. I believe there are adequate domestic efforts to meet agreed targets. Climate change is too important to allow weasel words and wiggle room to appease short term political pressures.

Clause

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

Position

No

Notes

A major condition to my response: changes in understanding of the severity of climate change may very well require stronger, earlier action. I would strongly oppose any easing of effort/commitment that was tied to global economic problems. There has been far too many such excuses used before to slow action. NZ has been far too quick to find opt out reasons. That needs to stop and be strongly opposed in future.

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

This gives the needed certainty for business and other sectors of the community. It enables major emitters to demonstrate their intentions and actions. It ensures accountability and enables tracking of the national level goal.

Clause

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

Position

Yes - the third emissions budget should be able to be changed but only when the subsequent budget is set

Notes

The stronger the message is conveyed in the ambition and direction of effort the better will be the certainty and business/public commitment to climate action. Incoming governments need to be able to signal changes of effort, but this must be far enough out from current political situation to protect the country from opportunist actions by 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

But only in exceptional circumstances where the national level circumstances are under challenge. The Climate Change Commission must be fully involved in any consideration and Parliament must take a full position on it (ie a vote that holds all parties accountable for their decision).

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

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

And in a clear and timely manner.

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

Policy plans must be comprehensive, fair, cost-effective, environmentally sustainable and honour the Treaty of Waitangi commitments. They must also reflect clearly the inter-generational commitment to deliver climate outcomes that can sustain future generations of New Zealanders. Here we face a major deficit and the ZCA will be a major indication of a commitment to start rectifying this deficit.

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

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

Clause

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

Position

Yes

Notes

Climate action must reflect both the need for mitigation and also adaptation. One without the other would be pointless in growing

understanding of each dimension of this challenge.

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

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

Absolutely.

Clause

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

Notes

Forty years of experience in public policy, much at the multilateral level, has convinced me that tackling climate change lies at the very heart of quality of life for NZ, its people and the values we hold dear. Until very recently I have been deeply disappointed at the manner in which climate action has been belittled by many in politics and in the business sector. NZ's tardiness has been a major blot on its claimed commitment to fairness, equality and responsibility. Most of all this indifference at best has been, to me, nothing more than inter-generational theft. By our inaction we have been stealing quality of life and opportunity from future generations. Accordingly the recent shift of approach and an apparent willingness by all political parties in the current parliament and a sizable number of major businesses to take action on climate more seriously is most welcome. I will be following very closely the ongoing process of the ZCB, the select committee phase and adoption of of a Zero Carbon Act. I realise that that will be the easy part. What follows will be as challenging as anything our country has faced in recent years. I am determined to play a full part in our country's efforts to take real, timely and meaningful action on climate, both adaptation and mitigation. I have high expectations for the leadership of our politicians, for current and future generations. I also have major expectations for business leaders, leaders in Maoridom and those who have the most to contribute to a fair and balanced path forward on climate action.