A climate law like the Zero Carbon Act is important because...

It would set a target set in law, based on copious, accurate scientific research to meet NZ’s international commitment the Paris 2015 Agreement and our own responsibilities to our "green and clean" image that has been significantly tarnished by the Dairy industry and our dependence on fossil fuels. Cross party support has to happen. All areas and sectors of NZ society need to be pro-active in transitioning to a low carbon economy that requires an early rather than a late response. We owe this to future generations so they can thrive.

Long-term target

I support a Zero Carbon target of reducing total greenhouse gases to net zero by 2050 or even before. I also support taking an evidence-based, scientific approach and co-operation with our Pacific neighbours to ensure our efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions are effective: in the process, we should aim to stay well within 1.5 degrees C emission budget to limit global warming by reducing short and long-lived gases to sustainable levels. The 2050 zero-emissions target should be reached by reducing our own emissions and not by using international carbon credits.

Climate Commission

I support the establishment of an independent Climate Commission that is made up of health, global warming and scientific experts, including iwi, Pacifica and community/local government representatives, as well as accomplished Science communicators who provide researched advice to government, who then manage the application of the law for groups that do not comply with requirements. I do not support industrial interests being on the Commission. All Commissioners should be knowledgeable about equity issues in order to bring about wide-spread social change. The Commission also needs to monitor and report on progress towards zero-emission goals.

Adaptation

I support a plan for adaptation to climate change being included in the Zero Carbon Act but it would take more commissioners to act in these focus areas. Equity issues should be upheld in this process so that financial gain from status-quo, health-harming practices are addressed transparently and thoroughly. Adaptation work should not take away the Commission's top-priority climate change mitigation role.

Climate justice

A Zero Carbon Act must be just and fair in that it honours Te Tiriti o Waitangi; ensures a just transition for workers and communities; and avoids passing on the costs to future generations.

Further comments

It is now urgent that we take up our NZ and global citizen responsibilities for the targeted zero-emissions target, set through the NZ Carbon Emissions Act, to reduce greenhouse gases that otherwise undermine our future capacity to survive on our one and only planet. To leave such climate mitigation action any later, will escalate the problem beyond our scientific, creative and financial capacity to address pollution issues with success. Hence the urgent need to work on a "sharp emissions decline" through appropriate legislation. "The later we start: the harder it gets". (NZ Climate and Health Council newsletter.)