

Your submission to Zero Carbon Bill

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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

This target should not be in legislation that is entrenched; there is a need for our 2050 target to be protected from change by a simple majority vote.

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

I recognise the importance of doing something about the rapid increase of CO2 emissions but it is also important that all sectors take responsibility to lower their emissions. It would not be appropriate for methane emissions to be stabilised at their current high level.

Clause

3. How should New Zealand meet its targets?

Position

Domestic emissions reductions only (including from new forest planting)

Notes

The focus must be on reducing our own emissions. Recent experience of using international carbon units has been very unsatisfactory and has not achieved the outcomes needed. The Zero Carbon Act should be met through domestic emissions reductions only. I support the 'firewall' principle and agree with Generation Zero that "Relying on international carbon credits (even if the credits have integrity) creates uncertainty about what reductions need to be achieved in New Zealand. It also means we are investing in other countries' low emission transitions, rather than our own." There needs to be acceptance that we must not seek to reduce GHG emissions through activities that have adverse environmental impacts.

Clause

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

Position

No

Notes

I have selected NO because the target must be legally binding. However, I accept that there might be a few rare circumstances in which the 2050 target might be revised in exceptional circumstances. These include: • Where there is a significant change in scientific knowledge relating to climate change. • Where there is a significant change in international law (for example, the Paris Agreement becoming more ambitious). It is vital that governments are prevented from using economic grounds to revise the target. I support Generation Zero's position that "Any revision to the 2050 target should require the Government to take into account advice from the Climate Change Commission, and obtain Parliamentary approval." Like Generation Zero I also support "active consideration of a mechanism whereby the Commission is periodically required to review the ambitiousness of the Zero Carbon Act target, premised on the Paris Agreement 'no backsliding' principle, which means that the target can only increase in ambition."

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 the budgets being 5 years in duration, and the first 3 emission budgets being set shortly after the introduction of the Zero Carbon Act. I also agree with Generation Zero that the proposed budgets should be put before the House of Representatives for parliamentary approval.

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. I agree with Generation Zero that "Emission 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 risk uncertainty and instability."

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

I have selected YES but this is only in a few rare circumstances, I agree with Generation Zero that "Any revision to an emissions budget should require the Government to take into account advice from the Climate Change Commission, and obtain Parliamentary approval." As indicated above, I do not support economic grounds being used to revise an emissions budget.

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, I generally support the considerations in the Discussion Document. We submit that all decisions made under the Zero Carbon Act should be informed in the first instance by (a) the core principles outlined in Part I: Zero Carbon Act framework, including honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and (b) the centrality of the long-term target. I support Generation Zero's list of additional matters that should also be considered by the Government and the Climate Change Commission when setting budgets, namely:

- Scientific knowledge about climate change.
- Relevant technology.
- Tikanga Māori, and Māori interests.
- New Zealand's social circumstances, in particular the likely impact of the decision on fuel poverty and employment.
- New Zealand's economic circumstances, including the competitiveness of particular sectors of the economy.
- New Zealand's fiscal circumstances.
- Synergies with adaptation policies to address climate risks.
- Energy policy, including energy supply and the carbon intensity of the economy.
- Co-benefits of emissions reduction measures.
- Minimising cumulative emissions of long-lived greenhouse gases.
- New Zealand's international aviation and shipping emissions.
- International circumstances, including (but not limited to):

 - the human and economic cost of disruptive climatic events globally but in particular across the Pacific;
 - New Zealand's international legal and diplomatic obligations;
 - the likelihood of carbon leakage from domestic policies;
 - the carbon embodied in imported products consumed by households, firms and government activity in New Zealand.

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 agree with Generation Zero's view that the Zero Carbon Act should introduce a strict time frame of 6 months to publish policy plans after setting an emission budget.

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

I agree with Generation Zero that 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. Consideration should be given to the need for public education and how this will be delivered. The role of local government as a partner of central government should also be considered.

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

I agree with Generation Zero that the Climate Change Commission should have two key functions: (a) providing expert advice, and (b) monitoring our progress and holding the Government to account. The UK Climate Change Committee model is a strong starting point. I agreed with Generation Zero that 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. The Commission 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's role is to provide expert advice and oversight, and it is the

Government that should hold ultimate responsibility and be held to account under the Zero Carbon Act. • 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) 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)?

Notes

I agree with Generation Zero that it would be inappropriate for the Commission to have decision-making functions in relation to the ETS. Similarly, I agree with Generation Zero that dividing decision-making powers between Government and the Commission "risks undermining the comprehensiveness and coherence of economy-wide policy plans under the Zero Carbon Act."

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 broadly agree with the proposed list of essential and desirable expertise for Climate Change Commissioners in the Government's discussion document: "Essential expertise: • 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." I also support the inclusion of public health.

Clause

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

Position

Yes

Notes

Yes. I support the Climate Change Adaptation Technical Working Group's recommendation that a strong mandate for adaptation, including clear central government responsibilities, should be set out in primary legislation. As Generation Zero argues, "There are important synergies between mitigation and adaptation. Addressing both areas through the same governance framework will promote coordination, co-benefits and efficiencies."

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 support the proposed national climate risk assessment, and a national policy plan to address these risks.

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. As Generation Zero suggests, this reporting power will: "• Provide information to better enable the Government to understand the scope of climate change risks and plan accordingly • Incentivise organisations to devote their own resources to developing high-quality adaptation plans. These reports are beneficial to the organisations themselves. The first round of reporting under the UK Act triggered organisational change in 78% of reporting authorities, including the embedding of climate risk and adaptation issues.⁶⁴ It also led to many organisations considering climate risks for the first time, and provided the impetus for organisations to plan to assess climate risks in the future. • Promote positive flow-on effects to other organisations by providing 'good practice' examples of how to assess and address climate risks. This can lead to cross-sector information networks for sharing adaptation risk.