

Your submission to Zero Carbon Bill

Reference no: 12715

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

Out of the three choices offered, I support net zero emissions across all greenhouse gases by 2050 as it is the most ambitious, and therefore the most just, of the three options. However, in order to play our part in keeping overall warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, New Zealand should be aiming to have net zero emissions by 2040 rather than 2050. The option I support (net zero emissions) should not preclude taking a "two-baskets" approach to long-lived and short-lived gases - we should aim for negative levels of long-lived gases by the target date, while reducing short-lived gases to sustainable levels. Emphasis should be placed on reducing fossil fuel based emissions swiftly given that untapped fossil fuel supplies are a much safer store of carbon than biological offsets like forests which can be subject to fire and disease.

Clause

3. How should New Zealand meet its targets?

Position

Domestic emissions reductions only (including from new forest planting)

Notes

It is imperative (economically and morally) that New Zealand's economy becomes carbon-neutral as soon as possible - hence the target in the Zero Carbon Act should be met from domestic emissions reductions only. However, New Zealand has international legal and moral responsibilities to support and assist in mitigation and adaptation in developing countries through mechanisms such as additional aid, or perhaps purchasing international carbon credits. These measures should be additional to New Zealand's domestic mitigation measures. The New Zealand government should also be careful that the resources it supplies to developing countries to mitigate and adapt to climate change empower the local people rather being a form of economic colonisation by stealth.

Clause

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

Position

No

Notes

The 2050 target should not be altered in response to "economic changes" as this undermines its long-term certainty. However, the ability to revise the 2050 (or 2040!) target to be more ambitious (for instance, in light of major changes in social attitudes, scientific understanding, technological advances or international agreements) should be permitted.

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 agree with 5-year budgets set 10-15 years in advance so that three will be in place at any given time. However, having intermediate goals within five-year budgets and annual reporting (at least) against those goals will be important to ensure that emissions reductions are not pushed to the end of those periods. The cumulative amount that New Zealand is responsible for emitting up to 2050 is important - the budgets should be made so that New Zealand's emissions are cut drastically in the first set of five-year plans.

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

Emissions budgets should not be altered in response to "economic changes" as this undermines its long-term certainty. However, the ability to revise the last budget to be more ambitious (for instance, in light of major changes in societal attitudes, scientific understanding, technological advances or international agreements) should be permitted.

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

No

Notes

Emissions budgets should not be altered in response to "economic changes" as this undermines its long-term certainty. However, the ability to revise the last budget to be more ambitious (for instance, in light of major changes in societal attitudes, scientific understanding, technological advances or international agreements) should be permitted.

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

I agree with the factors proposed in the discussion documents. However, I think that there should be particular emphasis placed on the government's obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi - climate change action should be used to empower, rather than further disenfranchise, tangata whenua. The Government and the Climate Change Commission should engage with tangata whenua and Maori world views when setting budgets. The Government and Climate Change Commission should also be considering fairness (intra- and inter-generational equity) and environmental sustainability when setting budgets. They should also be taking into account New Zealand's contributions to international aviation and maritime emissions. The Government and Climate Change Commission should be applying a precautionary approach when deciding what emissions trajectory that is consistent with the collective obligation under the Paris Agreement to keep warming to 1.5 degrees C above pre-industrial levels. They should also be seeking to front-load emissions reductions to reduced the cumulative amount that New Zealand emits up to the target date.

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

We must learn from the mistakes of the UK's Climate Change Act and specify a strict timeframe for producing a plan. However, that time should be sufficient for the Climate Change Commission and Government to engage with the public (particularly tangata whenua and young people) as to our values and priorities relating to climate change so that we as a society have collective ownership of our climate action plans.

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's policy plans to meet emission budgets should be comprehensive, fair (within current generations and between current and future generations), cost-effective, environmentally sustainable, and reflect our foundational commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. In setting plans to meet the emissions budgets, the government should be: - engaging with and considering devolving power and resources to tangata whenua to enable action on priority areas for tangata whenua. - listening to and considering Maori world views. - consulting and working with local government to encourage local and regional efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change. - engaging with the general public, particularly minorities and young people, about our values and priorities for climate change action and, if necessary, educating the public about the various options. - considering New Zealand's consumption emissions (the emissions costs of things done or produced overseas that benefit New Zealanders/are used here) and in particular the relative consumption emissions and other environmental impacts of the various mitigation and adaptation measures (eg the emissions cost of producing electric cars overseas). - considering the impact of its current activities on other planetary boundaries (eg biodiversity, nutrient pollution) and, in particular, the relative impacts/benefits of various adaptation and mitigation measures. - taking into account New Zealand's contribution to international aviation and maritime emissions and the effects of mitigation and adaptation policy on those emissions. - making sure they're based on the best science available. - taking into account the importance of minimising New Zealand's cumulative emissions up to the target date by front-loading emissions reductions. - taking into account the justice implications of climate change impacts and the relative costs/benefits to already disadvantaged groups of mitigation/adaptation measures. - ensuring a just transition for workers in sunset industries. - encouraging innovation.

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

The Commission should not be a decision-making body - I support the Climate Commission having two functions: (1) providing expert advice (2) monitoring New Zealand's progress and holding the government to account. However, the Government should be legally required to consider and formally respond to the Commission's advice, and to provide an explanation if they do not act on it.

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

It is important that the Climate Change Commission have the independence to critique the NZ ETS and to suggest alternatives.

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

Expertise in public health should also be included, as well as expertise on behavioural and institutional change. People with interdisciplinary expertise should also be included, as well as respected non-experts (similar to lay-people on disciplinary tribunals). Expertise in consensus decision making and facilitation will also be important. Consideration should also be given to having representatives for or from young people and minority groups. There should be strong Maori representation on the Commission. Gender and other diversities should also be considered when making up the Commission.

Clause

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

Position

Yes

Notes

This may require a separate adaptation sub-committee within the Climate Commission.

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 agree with having a national risk assessment and adaptation plan but strong engagement with local government and affected communities will be essential.

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

Requiring reporting makes people think about these issues. Information is required before action can be taken.

Clause

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

Notes

As a young person, the Zero Carbon Act process gives me some hope for New Zealand's future. Ambitious action on climate change is essential if we want to create a more just New Zealand and a more just world. Climate change and mitigation and adaptation to it will shape New Zealand's future - it is essential to put in place a Zero Carbon Act so that we have the constitutional infrastructure for action to occur in a just way.

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