

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

In order to avoid tipping points a target needs to be set now. 2040 is probably a more realistic target from the point of view of the climate, but may be too ambitious from the point of view of changing human behaviour.

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 also see that the second option is attractive from the point of view of political consensus, but the danger is that we spend all our time bickering about whether "stabilised" means reduction in agricultural emissions or not. Number 3 is the safer option for avoiding climate feedback loops.

Clause

3. How should New Zealand meet its targets?

Position

Domestic emissions reductions only (including from new forest planting)

Notes

I think we should be responsible for dealing with our own emissions. In medieval times you could buy "indulgences" to offset your sins - that morally dubious practice was one of the factors leading to the Reformation. In the long run it is better to find ways to take responsibility for dealing with our own emissions.

Clause

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

Position

No

Notes

Only if scientific evidence is quite clear that it is safe to change that 2050 goal or that it is necessary to bring it forward to 2040. I think that special circumstances, like disasters, may require revisions to short term targets (see below), but that the long-term target should not be subject to political revision.

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

Short-term targets with which everyone is engaged will be essential to the successful achievement of the ultimate goal.

Clause

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

Notes

If there are exceptional circumstances, the short-term budgets can be changed, but it seems logical to me that in those circumstances it would be the first or second budget that should be deviated from, and that it would be imperative to get back on track by the time the third budget arrived.

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

Notes

See above.

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

Essential. Everyone, and especially businesses and governments, needs certainty about what will happen within what timeframe so that they can plan.

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

Notes

I think that expertise in human behaviour and communication are two of the most important criteria. Ernest Shackleton held that optimism and imagination were two of the most important qualities in an explorer. Members of the Commission need to be similarly equipped for their adventure into unknown territory, and they need to be able to convey selfless determination, urgency, hope and courage in order to unite the country behind the programme.

Clause

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

Position

Yes

Notes

It will engage more people in thinking about how climate change will affect them and, by thinking of ways in which they can adapt, hopefully they'll also mitigate.

Clause

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

Notes

This is the survival challenge of our age. It must not be hijacked by those only interested in short-term advantage. For this reason I would like to make a plea for cross-parliamentary agreement on a framework and a programme. I am one among many who will condemn any party which tries to make political mileage out of messing around with the planet's survival