

Your submission to Zero Carbon Bill

Reference no: 12786

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

Notes

I also wish the target to be the 3rd option, meaning a combination of option 2 and 3. That means net zero across all gases by 2050 at the latest, in line with global agreement to restrict warming to less than 2 degrees. Ideally net zero for all gases by 2040 or thereabouts, to have a chance of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees, as agreed by Paris Agreement. However 2 baskets approach, with agricultural methane stabilised at an amount agreed by Climate Commission, but well under 1990 emissions levels. That means CO₂, N₂O and other long-lived gases need to reach negative net emissions between 2040 and 2050. And fugitive CH₄ emissions from fossil fuel production and use need to be zero by 2050.

Clause

3. How should New Zealand meet its targets?

Position

Domestic emissions reductions only (including from new forest planting)

Notes

NZ is a developed nation and needs to lead, as agreed in the Paris Agreement. So we need to be responsible for meeting our commitments and any international credits are additional, not part of our net zero target.

Clause

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

Position

No

Notes

Only by legislative change, so that it only happens under an exceptional circumstance.

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

Clause

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

Position

Yes - each incoming Government should have the option to review the third budget in the sequence

Notes

Yes, but only under exceptional circumstances as defined by the Climate Commission. It is important that new governments have limited power to alter budgets, as that gives certainty and ensures those future governments are not pressured to tinker with the interim goals towards reaching the 2050 target.

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

Generally no, but perhaps with a clause that allows changes in response to major events, so long as the 2050 target is not compromised.

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 would add that precautionary approaches need to be part of the scientific and economic considerations, so that weighting is given to probability analysis. All too often scientific analysis that focuses on a 50% or 67% probability of staying below 2 degrees is taken to indicate certainty. In other words, I don't think it's good enough to set goals that result in a larger emission profile between 2020 and 2050, if the probability of staying below 2 degrees is significantly lower than if we choose a pathway that results in a smaller emissions profile.

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

Comprehensive and detailed plans are essential and should be completed within a year of the the budgets being set by the Climate Change Commission.

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, cost-effective, environmentally sustainable, and be based on current best practice. In conjunction with local government, central government agencies need to develop plans that give certainty and incentivise businesses to drive through emission reductions in their business practices. It is also vitally important for all branches of government to engage closely with their communities, to better understand and enhance community capabilities in responding to climate change. After all, it is individuals and families who will ultimately reduce emissions through their actions and their purchasing decisions.

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

Yes, the Climate Commission needs to provide expert advice and monitor our progress, and hold the government to account accordingly.

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

Elected officials should ultimately be responsible for implementing the 5 year plans and for meeting Zero Carbon Act targets. The same applies to the ETS settings. The Commission is not democratically elected or accountable to the public, so while they give the advice, the government still has to be responsible.

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

Also community action, as well as community engagement and communications.

Clause

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

Position

Yes

Notes

This is also crucial. It could be separate legislation, but seems logical to include in one Act.

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

We could adopt a similar model to the UK, with a requirement for mandatory reporting by key organisations in the public and private sectors.

Clause

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

Notes

Well done on finally (finally!) setting up this piece of legislation. It is desperately needed and it needs multi-party support. We all know how important this issue is. One thing that has been left out is the need somewhere, somehow, to account for consumption-based emissions. There are currently gaps globally in the areas of international air travel and shipping, but more importantly, we need to avoid a situation whereby developed (or other) countries offshore most of their production and their citizens still continue to buy products with high embedded emissions. Of course the idea is that China and other countries will be limited by their own emission targets, but there is a genuine danger that it could spiral out of control, and indeed many say it already has. So while the Paris target is for domestic emissions and that is the primary target, there should also be a mechanism to ensure consumption-based emissions are also being reduced and ideally there should be a 2050 net zero target for all embedded emissions.

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