

Your submission to Zero Carbon Bill

Reference no: 12902

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

Having certainty and clarity about the government's commitment to a target will help councils and businesses take more decisive and informed action towards reducing emissions as they do their planning.

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

Option 2 as a minimum. The Paris Agreement requires developed countries to do their share toward a target that offers reasonable hope that warming will be below 2 degrees. This means net zero longlived gases by 2050 at the latest, and preferably closer to 2040. The even more desirable goal of limiting temperature increase to 1.5 degrees implies a transition to net negative emissions of long-lived gases within the same timeframe. Current scientific views suggest that short-lived gases, at least those arising from biological processes, should be considered separately and that for these, stabilisation is the aim. The issue then is what is the appropriate stabilisation level. It is reasonable to let this be based on a recommendation from the Climate Change Commission in response to emerging understanding of the warming impact of different levels of stabilisation, and the effects of methane release from thawing permafrost. There is little doubt in current scientific discourse that the stabilisation level for biological methane would need to be well below current levels. Methane leakage from fossil fuel extraction and distribution should be reduced to zero by 2050 at the latest. The benefits of this would be wide-ranging, including enhanced water quality resulting from a shift from high-emissions agriculture to lower impact primary rural industries. The transition to a net zero economy is clearly a very significant challenge, but one that must be embraced to prevent 'run away' global warming and damaging climate change.

Clause

3. How should New Zealand meet its targets?

Position

Domestic emissions reductions only (including from new forest planting)

Notes

New Zealand should make a strong and clear commitment to prioritize domestic reduction activity through new forest planting and other sequestration activities (e.g. soil carbon). Past experience has shown that the carbon credit approach is often largely ineffective in reducing emissions, and the major danger here is that it gives a false impression of effective action, fostering complacency. There is also doubt about the availability of overseas credits, given most countries would need to make significant reductions to meet their own targets and hence would not have large quantities of credits available for export.

Clause

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

Position

No

Notes

Businesses and councils need clear leadership and certainty about emissions targets in order to act decisively toward reducing emissions in their own planning. If there are major changes in scientific knowledge or international laws, agreements, or systems, government targets can be revised through legislative change.

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 - the third emissions budget should be able to be changed but only when the subsequent budget is set

Notes

The third emissions budget should only be able to be changed under clearly defined exceptional circumstances defined by the Climate Change Commission. It is crucial that new governments are limited in their powers to alter emissions budgets, given the need for certainty, and consistent progress towards 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

The need for certainty and continuity in progress toward the target is too great.

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**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

Yes. Time is of the essence and clear, quantifiable direction is urgently needed. Plans should be completed within a year of the Climate Change Commission sets the 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

Central government and local councils need to develop initiatives that incentivise businesses to reduce emissions, and councils need to work closely with the businesses and individuals in their communities to plan in ways that meet their particular needs and make reducing emissions a matter of improving quality of life in the community, e.g., better cycleways and excellent public transport not only can reduce emissions, but improve well-being.

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, because the CCC can hold government to account, provide expert advice and support, and independently monitor progress toward targets.

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

Ultimately, councils and central government needs to act democratically and take responsibility for meeting the emissions targets.

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**Clause**

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

Position

Yes

Notes**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

You have elected to withhold your personal details from publication.