

**Subject:** Zero carbon bill 2018

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Interventions  
ZERO CARBON BILL 2018

Date:  
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To:  
Ministry for the Environment, c/o [ZCB.Submissions@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:ZCB.Submissions@mfe.govt.nz)

From: Carol Peters  
One Double Five Community House

#### PURPOSE

1.  
These interventions respond to the questions in the Ministry for the Environment's (MfE's) "Our Climate, Your Say" consultation document 2018 regarding the Zero Carbon Bill (the Bill).

#### OVERVIEW

The introduction of the Zero Carbon Bill is essential for our present and future.

Q1: What process should the Government use to set a new emissions reduction target in legislation?

3.  
MfE offers a binary choice ("Pick one"). However, rather than merely setting a target in legislation, the dual approach at p34 is preferred: "Government could set a more general statement of ambition in the Bill [...]Then, the [...]Commission could advise, within a defined timeframe, on the specific target consistent with the statement of ambition."

Q2: If the Government sets a 2050 target now, which is the best target for New Zealand?

4.  
Anything less than "radical" action in this time of existential climate crisis would literally be a fatal mistake. We support the target which is most aspirational: i.e. Net zero emissions across all GHGs by 2050 (at the latest, if at all possible sooner).

Q3: How should New Zealand meet its targets?

5.  
New Zealand should be using the most ambitious, effective, far-reaching emissions reduction package, and that would seem to include overseas units.

Q4: Should the Bill allow the 2050 target to be revised?

6.  
Yes. Mandating the Climate Change Commission (the Commission) to periodically advise on specific targets maximizes the much-needed responsiveness to new quality information moving forward.

#### EMISSIONS BUDGETS

Q5: Emissions budgets covering the next 15 years - Do you agree?

7.  
Yes, as long as they're reviewable.

Q6: Should the Government be able to alter the last emission budget?

8.  
Yes.  
Q7: Should the Government be able to alter the second emission budget (under exceptional circumstances)?

9.  
Yes.  
Q8: Do you agree with the considerations we propose that the Government and the Commission take into account when advising on and setting budgets?

10.  
No, in so far as our "overview" comments above regarding "certainty" are concerned. Moreover, five yearly budget settings may mitigate politicization of budget-setting somewhat, but an entrenched antagonistic 'opposition Party' parliamentary system will ensure that a culture of politicians' politicizing of the issues will endure (sadly). Five yearly budget settings would need to be augmented with other mechanisms to mitigate (and hopefully progressively neutralize) the worst effects of such a destructive egoic culture. Such belts and braces should at a minimum include:

a.  
Constitutional transformation that entrenches our particular 'brand' of value-based democracy founded on He Whakaputanga and Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and which:

i.

prioritizes the protection of our Life-sustaining environment first,

ii.

human rights second,

iii.

democratic institutions third, and crucially

iv.

clarifies that values (i)-(iii) above are superior to the privileges of corporate legal personality entities (which are, in the opinion of many economic and other experts critically over-blown);

b.

Urgent implementation of a Living Standards framework (aligned with Aotearoa's values-based constitution) to replace the Gross Domestic Product as a primary driver of State policy development; and

c.

Implementation of critical civics and economics education in schools, so as to nurture a new generation of empowered local and national leadership across the country that will keep our elected officials accountable.

10.2

The purpose of "Banking or borrowing from one emissions budget to the next" is also unclear. To treat the urgent imperative of reducing Life-destroying GHGs like just another balance sheet line item seems inappropriate philosophically and in practice (considering that this banking/ borrowing approach seems to have echoes of another philosophically failed mechanism, the ETS).

10.3

Government would do better to promote and reinforce the inalienable right to life that is under serious threat, and must be protected - rather than implying that our state of emergency can be abstracted down to numbers on a spreadsheet, and that moving those values around will somehow make a difference. It won't (it's more akin to shuffling deckchairs around on the Titanic). However, one can imagine that it could be a way to manipulate data so as to obscure any Government missed targets, thereby facilitating the avoidance of political accountability - the very opposite of what we need from our elected officials, our decision-makers, and our GHG reducing systems.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Q9: Should the Bill require Governments to set out plans within a certain timeframe to achieve the emissions budgets?

11.

Yes.

Q10: What are the most important issues for the Government to consider in setting plans to meet its budgets?

12.

We repeat our comments in the above "Overview" section and Q8 above, and emphasize that such planning needs to:

12.1

Have a strong nexus with a values-based approach, especially the protection and realization of internationally recognized human rights - including those regarding a healthy environment. This is particularly important as those more vulnerable and disempowered in society - children, women, tangata whenua, disabled, elderly - will be affected earliest and more harshly by climate crisis;

12.2

Have due regard for the informed voices of local communities, tangata whenua, and the regions (for example, see Attached list of Climate instruments);

12.3

Recognize that the structural violence of the oppressive capitalistic economy includes intellectual property regimes, the insurance industry and other mechanisms. If wrongly calibrated, these will continue to facilitate the devious harvesting of wealth from the 99% and concentrate that wealth under the control of a relative few elites in Aotearoa and on our Planet;

12.4

Ensure honest quadruple bottom line (i.e. environmental, social, cultural and economic) auditing of companies to make transparent the full externalized costs of production. This will then enable a more well-informed response;

12.5

Commit to using honest language, including where necessary re-framing narratives in a tika (right, correct), pono (truthful, with integrity) and aroha (tolerance, understanding, compassion, loving) way (as dumbing down the truth ultimately does more net harm than good). For example:

a.

The statement "a new industrial revolution is taking place" implies this is a good thing. In truth, the industrialization of the necessities of Life have created a net deficit and net harm (poverty, climate crisis and such);

b.

The implication that Aotearoa has time to gradually phase in climate action "over time" using "long-term" targets flies in the face of the real near-term extinction event horizon which is rapidly approaching;

c.

We're beyond needing to create a "sustainable" economy that's "carbon neutral". We're in a sixth mass extinction event: we need a regenerative economy, including a GHG 'net negative' Aotearoa;

d.

Rather than mere health, socio-economic and environmental "benefits" which a move to a net zero emissions economy will incidentally deliver, these should be referred to as "human rights" which the State is obliged to protect and implement;

e.

The statement "Jobs are continually created and lost" may have been intended to appease people's labour and employment anxieties. However, it falsely implies that now is the same as before, by omitting that Aotearoa is now facing more job losses due to globalization, technological redundancy and other factors. Similarly with "the economy will continue to grow but possibly less quickly" - this perpetuates the dangerous idea that society can continue to violate the laws of physics and have infinite growth on a finite planet, without consequence (and that our Government's OK with that);

12.6

Ensure internal consistency of all Government statements and messaging. This is critical to support people to be clear in their understanding of climate crisis matters. For example:

a.

It's a nonsense to say on the one hand "we need to make sure we bring everyone with us and leave no one behind" when farming and agriculture are continuing to receive preferential treatment (be unfairly subsidized); and

b.

The statement "Over 30 years, New Zealand's economy will change, just as it has over the past 30 years" omits important context that neo liberal capitalism was introduced in the 1980's. That was a major "change" with profound consequences (largely negative). So to compare the past and future three decades is like comparing apples and oranges, unless and until there's an equally disruptive economic shift (hopefully for the better, e.g. to an economy more akin to democratic socialism); and

12.7

Concentrate attention on proven effective action such as GHG reducing proposals in "Drawdown - 100 Solutions to Reverse Global Warming" .

CLIMATE CHANGE COMMISSION

Q11: The Government has proposed that the Commission advises on and monitors New Zealand's progress towards its goals. Do you agree with these functions?

13.

Generally yes.

13.1

The Commission should ensure compliance of all climate change plans with Aotearoa's core values (see above re constitutional transformation, human rights, economic reform and strengthening a values-based society). This requires that the Commission have the freedom to be responsive and advise the government on climate change matters as it sees fit.

13.2

Furthermore, New Zealand has an independent Commerce Commission with strong powers, including an enforcement and adjudication role concerning the dairy sector. The Reserve Bank is also another independent entity with formidable decision-making powers in the area of monetary policy. The decisions of both have major and far-reaching consequences for New Zealand.

13.3

If these institutional precedents already exist, we should at least test the proposition that the Climate Change Commission, an expert body which is to deal with the most urgent issue of our time, should similarly have strong powers. Its mandate should at least enable it to make recommendations regarding its area of expertise, if not have a mix of advisory and binding powers (as does the Waitangi Tribunal).

13.4

We acknowledge the concern that "Delegating too much power could risk susceptibility to changes by future parliaments". By the same token, however, Governments that seek to destabilize the Commission for selfish and/ or short-term political agendas would indicate a much more menacing pathology of democracy (compared to the micro problem of a dysfunctional Commission). This risk makes all the more critical the need to entrench constitutional values and institutions to protect our democracy.

Q12: What role should the Commission have in relation to the ETS?

14.

Refer to our comments in the "overview" sections regarding the ETS, and above under Q11 regarding the Commission's powers. The Commission should have the ability to make decisions not just in respect of the ETS, but also make recommendations as to whether New Zealand should retain the ETS at all.

Q13: The Government has proposed that the Commissioners need a range of expertise. Do you agree?

15.

Generally yes. However, the range needs to be broadened to include not just the usual suspects of western scientists and economic 'experts' (so-called) which would arguably position New Zealand society on the spectrum of Stockholm Syndrome victims (in so far as many of these may be of a paradigm that significantly contributed to our climate demise in the first place). Rather, we need experts (and not necessarily conventionally 'credentialed' ones) that reflect the complex nature of the situation we're dealing with: e.g. psychologists, sociologists, tangata whenua with traditional and indigenous scientific knowledge, systems and chaos theorists, metaphysical scientists, etc.

ADAPTING TO THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Q14: Should the Bill cover adapting to climate change?

16.

Yes.

Q15: Do you agree with the Government's proposed functions to help us adapt to climate change?

17.

Yes, although the Commission's functions to help with adaptation should be periodically reviewable to enable the Commission to remain responsive to changing priorities and data.

Q16: Should we explore setting up a targeted adaptation reporting power that could see some organizations share information on their exposure to climate change risks?

18.

In the interests of full transparency and making well-informed decisions, yes. However, we are also in a technological, 'big brother', globalist Age where government agencies have already failed to protect information. A considerable risk is therefore the control, access and use of harvested data. The Government will need to first reassure robust systems are in place if it is to expect citizens to agree with increasing organizations' disclosure of more information.

CLOSING COMMENTS

19.

We request the opportunity to speak to our interventions before Select Committee.

Sincerely,

Dr Carol Peters QSM

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Attachment: Climate Declarations List

Far North Citizens' Climate Declaration (2 November 2015)

<https://www.scribd.com/document/290107183/Peoples-Climate-Crisis-Declaration-Nov-2015-final>

Our Climate Declaration (2017)

<http://www.ourclimatedeclaration.org.nz/>

Inaugural Māori Leaders Climate Change Summit Call to Action (25 March 2018)

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PO1803/S00339/maori-call-for-climate-action.htm>

Te Tai Tokerau Climate Action Declaration (8-9 June 2018)

<https://northlandclimatechange.org/2018/07/04/te-tai-tokerau-climate-action-declaration/>