Consultation on setting New Zealand’s post-2020 climate change target

Copy of your submission

Contact information

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Objectives for the contribution

Do you agree with these objectives for our contribution?  No

1b. What is most important to you?
I agree with aspects of the objectives for New Zealand’s contributions. In regards to objective one, ‘appropriate’ would be a better wording rather than ‘our fair share’. Emphasis on what is ‘fair’ sounds akin to ‘just enough’, and leaves New Zealand open to criticism from those most affected by the climate change impacts, such as our neighbouring Pacific islands.
In regards to objective two, the NZ contribution needs to channel costs towards the industries that are the main sources of emissions generation.
Objective three is the most important. The impacts of climate change will affect New Zealand over the long term, and our contribution must reflect the long term nature of the issue we are trying to address. The government needs to be clear on how we transition towards a low emissions economy, and must be willing to accept some costs of doing so.

What would be a fair contribution for New Zealand?

2. What do you think the nature of New Zealand’s emissions and economy means for the level of target that we set?
As agricultural emissions are our highest, it is a good idea to invest in possible emission-reducing solutions in this area. Forestry sinks are a relatively easy and inexpensive way to meet our targets. Issues arise when former forestry lands are converted for agricultural use. The transport sector is also a good place to make some easy gains, largely through carbon-efficient public transport development and encouraging the uptake of electric vehicles, which will require supportive infrastructure.

How will our contribution affect New Zealanders?

3. What level of cost is appropriate for New Zealand to reduce it's greenhouse gas emissions? For example, what would be a reasonable reduction in annual household consumption?
All New Zealand citizens should bear some costs but these should be proportionally aimed with emission sources bearing the brunt of costs. Some industries that drive the New Zealand economy are also driving emission production. An option may be to introduce a levy on these industries to contribute towards meeting our emission target.

4. Of the opportunities for New Zealand to reduce its emissions (as outlined on page 15 of the discussion document), which do you think are the most likely to occur, or be most important for New Zealand?
A transition to a low carbon economy is the most important. Greater gains can be made in the imports of
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electric/hybrid vehicles and improved public transport. These will help address both transport demand in cities and population growth. Increasing the supply of and infrastructure for electric/hybrid vehicles in New Zealand will help increase electricity demand and increase the value of New Zealand’s renewable resources. The status of the Tiwai smelter will be significant in how this occurs.

Summary

5. How should New Zealand take into account the future uncertainties of technologies and costs when setting its target?
It is good that the government is focusing on technological advances to help reduce our emissions. However, the government should not be reliant on a ‘miracle’ solution, and should seek solutions in the short term to address emissions. Difficult conversations will need to be had with the agriculture, energy, and transport industries to address their emissions.

Other comments

6. Is there any further information you wish the Government to consider? Please explain.
Domestic action to address emission should be the primary focus of the government. The international purchasing of carbon units should be a secondary focus, to cover what we cannot do on our own.
The government should also be aware of the role of leadership in the South Pacific. Nations from neighbouring Pacific are expected to be deeply affected by climate change, and yet themselves are low emission producers. Saying we are doing ‘our fair share’ will not be received well. New Zealand and Australia are leaders in the South Pacific region and should act accordingly.