

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



Copy of your submission

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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 strongly object to the concept of retrenching on energy production while our population continues to grow. I am increasingly concerned that my children and grandchildren will not enjoy a decent standard of living. If we promise to cut carbon dioxide emissions we must produce less energy (renewables other than hydro are presently unsustainable as Google recently discovered) and therefore future generations will not enjoy a lifestyle comparable to that which I've been lucky enough to know. A strong economy makes surviving disasters such as Christchurch's recent earthquakes possible. Cutting back would mean less of everything, including adaptability. Equally concerning, the poor would suffer disproportionately, with the number of unemployed growing exponentially as our economy regressed.

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?

The only fair level of cutbacks for the New Zealand people is zero. Hobbling our economy, even by a fraction would lead to suffering. Politicians are well paid and could afford higher power bills, but many of their fellow Kiwis would struggle. We can't be good global citizens if we become an impoverished and strife-torn country.

How will our contribution affect New Zealanders?

3. What level of cost is appropriate for New Zealand to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions? For example, what would be a reasonable reduction in annual household consumption?

Horrifically, terrifyingly and disgustingly is the answer to the main question above. Any cost is horrifying for a small country still in debt and should be particularly horrifying to our leaders. It's terrifying, because making us more backward is very scary for all of us, but especially for parents and women. I'm both a parent and female. I fear for my children's health and wellbeing in a nation rationing power, or suffering blackouts (as in the EU and USA), while also being aware that women suffer disproportionately in more primitive conditions. Giving birth is particularly fraught in a world without power and technology. Bureaucrats have no idea what's happening in individual homes and no right to order blanket restrictions in consumption of any sort. If there was a real need, then rules wouldn't be necessary. Just look at the World Wars. Society is generous and self-sacrificing when the problem is genuine.

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?

Don't touch any of them. The sun is presently very quiet and the earth is consequently not heating uncontrollably -

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or indeed, at all. It's likely we'll continue further into a cooling cycle and the oceans will consequently absorb more CO₂. This is extraordinarily dangerous as we are very close to the level at which plants have insufficient CO₂ to survive. The temperature data obtained over the past two decades are a strong indicator that we need to wait to be certain what the world's climate is actually doing. Taking drastic action in one direction could be very dangerous.

Summary

5. How should New Zealand take into account the future uncertainties of technologies and costs when setting its target?

We do have some information to help us consider this. Google recently made a heartfelt commitment to developing renewable energy and threw copious cash and some of the finest brains on the planet at the problem. Their reluctant conclusion was that it's impossible to rely on renewable sources to produce more energy than is used to make them, for now and the foreseeable future. Despite Google's commitment to this project they were clear that we are many years, if not decades away from making this equation work. It's very tempting to tie ourselves to some great sacrifice by making a grandiose gesture to reduce emissions below what they were in the past and airily assuming that technology will help us meet our targets without economic castration, but such an assumption would be hugely irresponsible. If anyone thinks that new inventions will make the equation of more people living on less while maintaining the same level of civilisation workable, they need to state what those developments will be and demonstrate that they're close to completion.

Other comments

6. Is there any further information you wish the Government to consider? Please explain.

Yes. Please consider the people. There are millions of us. We need to live in the light and warmth. We need hospitals with a steady supply of electricity, plenty of jobs in a strong economy, food that we can afford which goes in our mouths, not our gas tanks and strong warm homes capable of protecting us from an environment that has always been hostile and unforgiving. The people are not behind this commitment. We live in the world every day, some of us for many decades, and we know damn well it's not warming in some unnaturally accelerated and out of control way. Don't throw us to the wolves.