

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? Yes

1b. What is most important to you?

That our contribution is derived from the reduction over time that is required to keep within the global carbon budget which we must not exceed if we are to stay within 2 degrees warming, and that we challenge other countries to set their INDCs in the same way - so that globally we can be sure that we are on track to avoid a budget blow-out and catastrophic climate change. Small incremental reductions from 1990 levels are not going to get us there.

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?

Very little. We are a wealthy country with options to diversify, and to be world leaders in areas like renewable energy generation and consumption. We should be relying on our strengths not playing up our claimed vulnerabilities.

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?

If (when) sea level rises by more than about 0.5 metres, I am likely to lose my house. That is only one direct cost of climate change; the disruption of our food supplies and increased violent weather events are of far greater concern than that personal cost. I consider that the potential costs of failing to act far outweigh the costs of mitigating greenhouse gas emissions. I am confident that with a smart policy approach to climate change mitigation, even ambitious reduction targets don't need to be costly. There are opportunities in mitigation as well as costs. Even setting that aside, the costs described in the consultation document seem very modest and I think its appropriate for New Zealand to bear the costs at the high end of the scale described in the consultation document.

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?

All are important, but the most immediately accessible options are stopping relying on fossil fuels to generate electricity for domestic and industrial purposes, and encouraging a large uptake of non-fossil fuel powered transport energy options.

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Summary

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

The target should be set with reference to what is required to transition to a low emissions future and stay within 2 degrees warming. The technologies and costs will depend on the policies put in place to ensure that the target is achieved. They should not drive the setting of the target.

Other comments

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

I was shocked to hear John Key say in Parliamentary question time today (2 June) that reducing emissions by 40% below 1990 levels would be disastrous for the New Zealand economy. That statement isn't borne out by his government's consultation document. Officials who presented at the consultation roadshow assured the audience that the government did not have a target in mind and were consulting openly, but Mr Key's statement suggests this is not the case at all, and that the government has already decided that it will only propose a modest target and then defend itself by reference to the cost of doing more. I feel like writing this submission is probably a waste of time given Mr Key's position on this issue, however my deep concern at whether my beautiful children will have a habitable planet for themselves and their children in the future motivates me to submit even if it seems futile.