Setting New Zealand’s post-2020 climate change target

Submission form

The Government is seeking views on New Zealand’s post-2020 climate change contribution under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

You can have your say by making a submission using this form or using the online tool available at www.mfe.govt.nz/more/consultations.

For more information about this consultation:

- Read our Consultation on New Zealand’s post-2020 international climate change contribution web page
- Read our discussion document: New Zealand’s Climate Change Target: Our contribution to the new international climate change agreement

Submissions close at 5.00pm on Wednesday 3 June 2015.

Publishing and releasing submissions

All or part of any written submission (including names of submitters), may be published on the Ministry for the Environment’s website www.mfe.govt.nz. Unless you clearly specify otherwise in your submission, we will consider that you have consented to website posting of both your submission and your name.

Contents of submissions may be released to the public under the Official Information Act 1982 following requests to the Ministry for the Environment (including via email). Please advise if you have any objection to the release of any information contained in a submission and, in particular, which part(s) you consider should be withheld, together with the reason(s) for withholding the information. We will take into account all such objections when responding to requests for copies of, and information on, submissions to this consultation under the Official Information Act.

The Privacy Act 1993 applies certain principles about the collection, use and disclosure of information about individuals by various agencies, including the Ministry for the Environment. It governs access by individuals to information about themselves held by agencies. Any personal information you supply to the Ministry in the course of making a submission will be used by the Ministry only in relation to the matters covered by this consultation. Please clearly indicate in your submission if you do not wish your name to be included in any summary of submissions that the Ministry may publish.
Questions to guide your feedback

Your submission may address any aspect of the discussion document, but we would appreciate you paying particular attention to the questions posed throughout and listed in this form. You may answer some or all of the questions. To ensure your point of view is clearly understood, you should explain your rationale and provide supporting evidence where appropriate.

Contact information

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Dr Margaret E Gordon</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisation (if applicable)</td>
<td>Retired VUW Plant Scientist submitting as an individual</td>
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Objectives for the contribution

1a. We have set the following three objectives for our contribution:

- it is seen as a fair and ambitious contribution – both by international and domestic audiences
- costs and impacts on society are managed appropriately
- it must guide New Zealand over the long term in the global transition to a low emissions world.

Do you agree with these objectives for our contribution?

☐ Yes, but future generations must also be considered, and goals and effective policy added

1b. What is most important to you?

That the government stops relying on our high percentage of renewable energy, the suitability of our climate for growing forests and the current ability to buy carbon credits and develops true emissions reduction policies without further delay, giving us a climate change policy we can be proud of as real contributors to the reduction of global emissions. It is depressing to tread water and we need real inspiration, leadership, and facilitation.
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?

I think NZ should be able to set a renewable percentage for energy at close to 100%. The recent part privatisation of energy gentailers, which has further entrenched the competitive and profit driven model, has made this harder, but it is up to the government to redress this by facilitate the cooperation necessary to ensure peak energy use is virtually all fine tuned to be provided by renewable energy, with the aid of hydro, and as soon as possible with smart grids linked to batteries, which could have widespread adoption if solar energy and electric car use was promoted. This would leave gas consumption solely for the maintenance of an emergency facility.

Our good supply of renewable energy should be used to kick start the widespread adoption of electric vehicles for public transport and for domestic use. We should therefore be able to set ambitious reductions for fuel use. Home generation via solar (and sometimes wind) need not be poorly rewarded by the gentailers as “competition”, since the growth in electricity use for transport at the expense of fossil fuels would make welcome extra power sources that the gentailer had not had to build. Home generation via solar (and sometimes wind) could cease to be poorly rewarded and so the solar industry could grow.

Forestry profitability has been undermined by recent policies such that many forests were cut down and planting is not yet seen as a good investment. These policies need revision to improve our tree planting programmes.

We have made agricultural emissions a more acute problem through specialising. Along with research on reducing emissions from animals, we need to find ways of diversifying, while also paying attention to water use and distribution. Policies that make the consumers we export to partly accountable might seem fair, but will have their limitations in that they could discourage purchase. The challenge here is great, but all the more rewarding if we can achieve a substantial reduction.

I am not quite clear at present whether our population growth is a problem for our emissions goals, as implied, or whether our goals can be stated in terms of percentage reductions per head of population. Goals will have to be set according to our best population projections if goals must be set on a per countr basis.

How will our contribution affect New Zealanders?

3. What level of cost is appropriate for New Zealand to reduce it greenhouse gas emissions? For example, what do you think would be a reasonable impact on annual household consumption?

This question is not answerable. The less we spend now, or rather invest, the greater the cost to future generations. What lies ahead is not an option. It is something we have to deal with. What is most important is to make the process as much of an opportunity and an investment as possible and to ensure that those who are least well off are protected by government policy from becoming poorer while the better off may face some costs in the short term for a more secure long-term future.
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?

Conversion of fuel consumption from fossil-based to renewably generated electric will probably be the most important until the emission problems associated with agriculture can be reduced via research or via diversification.

I would prefer this question to be posed as what we can best be doing right now to start achieving solid results. Asking about what is likely to occur does not convey an intent to act.

Summary

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

Adopt a non-partisan approach to getting the best brains working on this. Consider plans of other countries that have soundly based proposals. Look for the range in possible outcomes and select targets that should be manageable, while setting policy to exceed these to the extent possible, in order to treat our young and not yet born citizens fairly.

Other comments

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

The goals

When your submission is complete

Email your completed submission to climate.contribution@mfe.govt.nz or post to Climate Change Contribution Consultation, Ministry for the Environment, PO Box 10362, Wellington 6143.

Submissions close at 5.00pm on Wednesday 3 June 2015.