Dear Sir/Madam

Re: New Zealand's climate change target: Our contribution to the new international climate change agreement: Discussion document.

Submission from Ann Graeme

I welcome the initiative to make a contribution towards this international agreement. We all know that climate change is happening and is, and will increasingly be, the greatest challenge facing our future. It behoves all countries to do their bit. Ducking the issue by saying we are a small country and insignificant in the world picture is dishonest and cowardly. Per head of population, our carbon footprint is very high. So here are my requests.

- We need to aim high. The New Zealand Government needs to set strong targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.
- So that they endure, these targets must be set in law and supported by all political parties.
- So far we have seen words without actions. Our targets should be accompanied by a list of actions which will mean that be actually achieve them.
- The MfE discussion document provides costs per household of meeting emission targets. It says the cost of making a 5% reduction will be about $1,270 per year per household, and the cost of making a 40% reduction will be $1,800 per year per household. A 5% reduction is pathetic. Please go for a meaningful reduction like 40% which isn't actually all that much more expensive. And the cost analysis doesn’t take into account the opportunities to improve economic growth, create jobs and boost the economy through low carbon policies, as well as savings individual households can make through things like fuel savings. These benefits are articulated by the Global Commission on the Economy and Climate and should be worked into a New Zealand context. If voters were told about the benefits as well as the
costs, they would be more likely to support a strong target. This has happened in California and surely New Zealanders are as smart as Californians!

- The economic analysis in the MfE Discussion Document does not include the cost of doing nothing, both to the economy and to households. Nor does the analysis address the loss of carbon from our vast, publicly owned native forests. These forests are being degraded by pests and losing carbon (as well as losing native species, becoming eroded and failing to provide optimum downstream flood protection). If pest control was widespread, the healthy forest would support more biodiversity, and also absorb and retain more carbon, so reducing our carbon emissions, securing our native ecosystems and benefitting tourism and our ‘clean green’ image.

Ann Graeme