

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



Copy of your submission

Contact information

Name Yvonne Gwyn

Organisation (if applicable)

Address [REDACTED]

Telephone [REDACTED]

Email [REDACTED]

Objectives for the contribution

Do you agree with these objectives for our contribution? Yes

1b. What is most important to you?

I'm sorry that I haven't had time to sit down and fully research this topic and write a proper response. I hope that some of my thoughts will be useful.

That the impact on society of climate change is fully weighted in setting targets. And also the opportunities for new businesses.

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?

That we need to work extra hard on reducing the emissions we can control to compensate for those we can't yet deal with so easily. We can't rest on our laurels and say we're doing well just because we already have a lot of hydroelectricity etc. Intergenerational equity is a major component of fairness. Current and previous generations have had the benefits of carbon usage without paying for the costs - we need to set a target that doesn't leave the biggest cost to the future. We need to start dealing with it now.

I'm in favour of reducing CO2 emission to 0 by 2050, and reducing other emissions as much as possible until better technologies/practices are developed for agriculture etc.

A fair target also should consider the proportion of costs that each person pays. Those that have profited most from carbon based industries in the wider sense should pay a greater proportion of the cost / those who are least able to pay or haven't benefited should pay a reduced amount.

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?

Well it depends on what the annual cost per household of the effects of climate change are in future. At least that much. And also what benefits might come from supporting faster change to new technologies and research. Also the related benefits of actions (eg health benefits from increased walking and cycling or walking to public transport). Plus of course the cost avoided by not increasing global temperatures beyond 2c (more storms, flooding, drought etc).

Given humans are notoriously short sighted I'm not sure it's ethical to ask people how much they're willing to pay today for a problem they won't feel the worst impacts of till years in the future.

I'd also suggest we should be erring on the side of acting slightly faster than is necessary to keep warming below 2c, given that's only a best guess. So if that means a higher cost per person today then I think that's justified.

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



Copy of your submission

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? They're all important of course, but I'd have to pick energy security as most important. I think we should use this opportunity to become more self sufficient in renewable energy for transport. Second would be remaining competitive in an environment where emissions of our products are relevant. I fear we are slipping behind on this.

Summary

5. How should New Zealand take into account the future uncertainties of technologies and costs when setting its target? Don't count your chickens. Don't rely on new technologies to mature in time to 'save us'. Start now so that we have a longer time to gradually reduce emissions rather than leaving it all to a later date and having to cut them twice as fast. A slower more certain approach will give certainty to businesses and others who need to understand the likely future situation to make investment decisions. To do this I think it's important that NZ develop a binding cross party agreement on this. One that can't be put aside at the whim of a new government. And I think the public need to be hugely involved in developing this. (To be honest I don't think this consultation process has received the funding and promotion it ought to have had.)

Other comments

6. Is there any further information you wish the Government to consider? Please explain. Please stop putting off the difficult decisions. We're at a time where society and the environment have changed/are changing rapidly and previous models won't work any longer. We need to act now. I don't want to be left behind to suffer by the time people my age finally reach retirement because the governments of today couldn't make the tough decisions. I don't want to have to explain to the children why we didn't act fast enough. Lets use New Zealand's advantages as best we can and man up and accept responsibility for the costs of the benefits we have been enjoying for the last couple of hundred years. Develop an enduring plan of action that will actually see emissions rates drop (As far as I know our rates are still rising even though we have current targets). The targets need a plan with teeth. it would be helpful to stop talking of this sort of things as just a boring tax, help Joe Public to understand what and why and feel invested in the changes. Avoiding catastrophic climate change is the biggest challenge we have ever been asked to deal with as a country and it needs to receive proportional attention and funding. It needs a champion.

Thanks for taking the time to read this. Best of luck!