Submission to the Climate Change Contribution Consultation Document

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Preamble: Thank you for the opportunity to submit on the Climate Change Contribution Consultation Document.

I am a concerned citizen who has followed the discussion of possible Climate Change and the contribution of greenhouse gases. Since 1999 I have kept track the predictions by leading climatologists and the alternative views of skeptics and deniers. I now consider the skeptics and deniers need to consider what will happen if they are wrong; the risk is too great AND the probability of disastrous climate change is very high.

As a New Zealander I am particularly interested in what New Zealand can realistically do to reduce emissions and prepare for the future effects when too little is done internationally as this seems very likely. It is not a question of what is fair it is a question of what NZ can realistically achieve over the next 10 to 20 years without overburdening low income groups.

Also I am concerned that our NZ government is not taking a strong enough stand in advocating for action internationally and it is not initiating significant measures to mitigate and adapt to Climate Change.

Q1. a. Do you agree with the above objectives for our contribution?

It is good to be making a start on a set of objectives. I have some agreement with the objectives provided in the Consultation Document. However New Zealand can be a leader rather than a follower in terms of its targets and the means by which we will successfully meet those targets.

In terms of Objective 1

Our targets need to be effective, ambitious and credible – here in NZ and also internationally. It is not enough to be 'seen' to be acting. What is needed is that our contribution is actually effective.

The targets in this document are not sufficiently ambitious to set a good example to the rest of the world about what level of targets are required.

We also need to do more than our 'fair share'. We want actual leadership from Government - as a model, as well as nationally and internationally.

For example it is not acceptable to expect other countries to lead the way in terms of mitigating climate change. As a small country we possess a certain agility that allows us to make changes that other countries find hard. In addition we are a first world nation and as such have much better ability to reduce than countries that are already using very little, and actually need to be allowed to increase their emissions to implement sustainability goals such as renewable energy sources and low carbon transport infrastructure. New Zealand has a proud history of leading the way – the vote for women, nuclear disarmament, progressive voting systems to name a few examples. We are a nation of leaders – not followers.

I also note that if part of our commitment to meet targets requires us to purchase carbon credits, then this is unacceptable.

In terms of Objective Two
The government have not done a cost of not acting and so have not done a sufficient cost analysis. They have analyzed the cost of mitigation on households but not the cost of inaction. In addition the opportunity cost of going for a low carbon future has not been addressed.

The Consultation Document has failed to calculate the costs to the New Zealand economy, social fabric and well being of residents and businesses of not doing enough to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

The impacts of climate change are global. We cannot isolate ourselves with regard to the costs to our society alone. Failure to act sufficiently to keep global warming to less than 2 degrees C will have huge costs (social, economic, environmental) that are completely ignored in this document! (*See Stern Report key points below *)

Costs provided in this Consultation Document are vague and need to be clarified.

In addition there there is no mention in the Consultation Document of the benefits of new technologies and the economic advantages they will bring if we lead the way.

There are more opportunities to reduce our emissions than are acknowledged here. For example see Smoke to Mirrors - by Kevin Cudby

In terms of cost of meeting our targets and the impacts on householders, the government should ensure that less well off households are not paying as much as better off households. Action to meet climate change targets should be used as a tool to reduce inequality of wealth not increase it.

**STERN REPORT - KEY POINTS**

**The dangers**
- All countries will be affected by climate change, but the poorest countries will suffer earliest and most.
- Average temperatures could rise by 5C from pre-industrial levels if climate change goes unchecked.
- Warming of 3 or 4C will result in many millions more people being flooded. By the middle of the century 200 million may be permanently displaced due to rising sea levels, heavier floods and drought.
- Warming of 4C or more is likely to seriously affect global food production.
- Warming of 2C could leave 15-40% species facing extinction.

**Economic impacts**
- The benefits of strong, early action considerably outweigh the costs.
- Unabated climate change could cost the world at least 5% of GDP each year; if more dramatic predictions come to pass, the cost could be more than 20% of GDP.
- The cost of reducing emissions could be limited to around 1% of global GDP; people could be charged more for carbon-intensive goods.
- Each tonne of CO2 we emit causes damages worth at least $85, but emissions can be cut at a cost of less than $25 a tonne.
- Shifting the world onto a low-carbon path could eventually benefit the economy by $2.5 trillion a year.
By 2050, markets for low-carbon technologies could be worth at least $500bn.

What we do now can have only a limited effect on the climate over the next 40 or 50 years, but what we do in the next 10-20 years can have a profound effect on the climate in the second half of this century.

Read the Stern review [here](#).

**In terms of Objective Three**

The long term is too long and partially responsible for so much inaction. We need to make changes now and over the short term. The longer we delay action (through having targets without annual time-lined action pathways) the more mitigating climate change is going to cost our country, and the harder it is going to be for us to actually achieve our set targets. Another reason for acting now is that it is easier to make changes while the economy is buoyant than when it is not.

SO this requires that

- The government must provide an effective annual pathway for us to make the transition to achieve the stated objectives. These must be achievable steps.

**Finally, in Objective Three** it is implicit in the terminology (“small open economy”, “need to be ready for a world”) that we are a small passive player.

**There are large risks in continuing as usual and increasing our emissions in that it is less risky to start taking action now rather than waiting until reduction of emissions are forced on us by International agreements the costs of adaption become very large.**

New Zealand should not be watching to see what will happen. New Zealand needs to be leading. Our contribution should be as a model sending a clear signal of how nations should be acting to mitigate climate change as well as giving New Zealanders clear guidance on how to act.

**Q1.b. What is most important?**

The most important objective for our contribution is LEADERSHIP. This should take four forms

1. The government itself providing leadership as a model of sustainability
2. The Government leading nationally – creating an environment where businesses and households understand the implications of climate change and know what is required in terms of personal and national action.
3. The Government providing leadership internationally – setting an example to other countries about what is needed to reduce our greenhouse gas emission to stay within the globally agreed limit of 2degC. **And especially being a prominent advocate for action at conventions and forums.**
4. **This issue needs cooperation across the political spectrum and efforts to engage all New Zealanders in the solutions. Climate policy can’t go on being a political football with major policy flip-flops every time there’s a change in government. We need stable climate policy that steers us clearly towards a zero carbon society. This will allow businesses to make good long-term decisions and New Zealand will benefit by attracting investment in low carbon industries and innovation.**

Expanding each of the above:-

1. Government as a leader and model of meeting low GHG targets. For example the Government MPs can lead by example by analysing their fuel use, travel travel and seeks ways that they can reduce their emissions.
2. Government leadership at the national level -

1. We need the government to take leadership, to educate the public about climate change, our contribution and also the importance of taking action on this issue.
   
   1. We need the Government to require issues around climate change to be taught as part of the curriculum in schools from the age of 11 years and onwards.
   
   2. In terms of educating the people of New Zealand, the government should take leadership like they have done in the past with the Drink Driving Campaign, Be a Tidy Kiwi Campaign, the Belt Up Campaign and the Stop Smoking Campaign. An education programme around climate change should include what people can do so that we are not scaring people into inaction. To present a positive campaign around Climate Change, the government could focus on benefits for health – like healthy transport, community development, and healthy unprocessed food.

2. The government needs to cease to allow new fossil fuel exploration on land or waters. How is it consistent to have climate mitigation objectives when the government is planning more coal-mining and supporting deep-sea oil drilling in NZ waters? The government needs to develop national goals that are consistent with its Climate Change targets. In particular, all new exploration of fossil fuels within and in the waters of New Zealand must cease immediate.

3. The government needs to give clear signals to businesses so that they can pursue sustainable economic development models that are low carbon. Business need security to do this
   
   1. This requires annual targets set by government NOW – so that businesses can have security to make the transition. The current targets are too far out and they will not assist with any transition.
   
   2. It is essential that the government seek cross party support so that businesses have security across changing governments.

3. There needs to be much more emphasis on communication and working together between departments within the government. At the moment, every department has its budget and is silo-ed and operating independently. Climate Change will affect every department – from decisions around transportation, to food production.

4. We need a Government Body for Climate Change.

5. Costs and benefits need to be shared across communities in ways that the less well off are not disadvantaged. People and industries who have more impact should pay more. Industries that contribute the most to climate change should pay more. We need to reduce our economic reliance on ruminant livestock and this could be done by increasing economic pressure, both by cost and benefit measures, that cause us to move away from this.

3. The Government needs to lead internationally and set ambitious targets. There are many reasons why we should take a leadership role in setting ambitious targets for climate change mitigation. Firstly we are on the security council which gives us influence above our size. Secondly we are a First World Country. We have a good lifestyle here in New Zealand that could become low carbon without too much difficulty. We are a small country with diverse geography, we can live locally and have a good life. Fourthly, unlike us, developing nations need to increase their emissions so that they can bring in the necessary infrastructure to achieve a good quality of life that is based on low carbon alternatives. Fifthly, New Zealand has taken leadership in the past and we can do it again. Sixthly, we have a responsibility to our Pacific neighbours who will be most affected by climate change. Finally, the impacts of a country are not limited to that country. We all benefit by saving the Amazon.
1. Targets need to be set by what the science says is needed to stay within 2degC – not by social/economic/political goals. Climate change is a physical phenomenon and targets need to meet this. I refer to the findings of the IPCC reports. Just as in wartime free markets need strong regulation so in combatting climate change strong regulation is needed. I say this whilst acknowledging Free Enterprise has a valuable contribution to make.

2. I believe that the government should set the target of 90% reduction in CO2 from 1990 levels by 2050 (level required by IPCC findings)

3. We need annual targets and pathways of action *beginning now* so that there is a clear pathway to us meeting this target.

Q2. What do you think the nature of New Zealand's emissions and economy means for the level of target that we set?

“What are we doing to reduce agricultural emissions?”

There is no mention in Box 4 of the CO2 emissions related to agricultural production – transport, cultivation, processing (drying milk uses coal), and export. All these areas offer opportunities for reducing emissions. Methane does not have a long term effect although it is a significant contributor. Also dairying is now reached more than the NZ environment can sustain and is not an efficient producer of protein. We need a mixed agriculture with a focus on diversity and energy efficiency – this approach would be more economically secure for NZ.

The Government needs to choose a target that supports the IPCC's latest findings and their scientific basis for targets rather than setting targets based mainly on economic targets. Climate change is a physical fact and we cannot have an economy without an environment. Targets need to be set by what the science says is needed to stay within 2degC – not by social/economic/political goals. Climate change is a physical phenomenon and targets need to meet this. I refer to the findings of the 5th IPCC report.

The targets the government has set are not sufficient. We believe that the government must set the target of 90% reduction in CO2 from 1990 levels by 2050 (level required by IPCC findings). For example, since we are close to 80% renewable electricity we can increase to 100% renewables, we need to immediately commit to zero new fossil fuel exploration. Give that only 1/5 of current known reserves can be burned for our planet to stay within the 2 degree C limit.

Targets must include annual goals. According to scientific evidence, 7% reduction CO2 emission per annum (Associate Professor Bob Lloyd, University of Otago).

Costs and impacts are determined in this Consultation Document without regard to connections between activities. Every department has its budget and operating independently. Ecological and systems research shows that this is not how the world works.

Q3. What level of cost is appropriate for New Zealand to reduce its greenhouse emissions?

For example what would be a reasonable reduction in annual household consumption?

SEE Response at Q1. Objective 2 - The costs to individuals will be far outweighed by increased costs of insurance premiums and council rates if nothing, or very little is done.

We need detailed examination of costs and the effects on well-being. For example, quality of life in NZ is typically higher even though people may earn less than in other countries. A failure to reduce
green house emissions and hence mitigate climate change will have far reaching negative effects to health and well being of New Zealanders.

All the people who are living on higher than average income are more able to take a cut rather than those at the bottom. In particular the very wealthy should pay by far the most. This is fair and equitable given that climate change is being caused by the activities of the wealthy and not the poor. Consider flying. Only 5% of all the people alive today have ever flown on an airplane. Wealthy people fly by far the most and use the most fossil fuels overall. We need an internationally agreed carbon tax on air fuel. This tax could go to helping poor countries cope with Climate Change.

Q4. Of these opportunities which do you think are the more likely to occur, or to be most important for New Zealand?

I support all of the New Opportunities listed in the Consultation Document (p15), with the caveat that with regard to the final part of the New Opportunities section we want to New Zealand to be aligned with the global transition in terms of best practice with other countries and to be front runners rather than being followers in the global transition.

I also wish to emphasize that in addition to pursuing new opportunities that expand our renewables and low carbon sectors, we also need to be reducing our reliance on industries and practices that use fossil fuels. This is a wise path as within 20 to 30 years there is a high probability that fossil fuels will become very expensive (and hopefully the burning of them strongly discouraged by International Protocols.

- I am cautious about recommending biofuels as a transition fuel. Biofuels could provide an opportunity for more burning of fossil fuels. However New Zealand needs to start now producing bio-diesel for vehicles that are essential (e.g. shipping, transport, and farm machinery) by using waste products and land not suitable for food crops. As well as reducing our CO2 emissions this will save a large amount of overseas funds and protect NZ from unstable energy markets.

Ref: From Smoke to Mirrors - by Kevin Cudby (Engineer and journalist)

From Smoke to Mirrors describes a master plan for banishing imported liquid fuel from New Zealand’s economy by 2040.

- We should encourage car share schemes within cities and discourage large high consumption vehicles.
- We need to be focusing on excellent public transport systems that are by nature low carbon and will give householders the confidence to give up their own vehicles.
- We should be encouraging cycling with excellent cycle-ways that support a variety of ages and abilities. In addition, nationwide education on safe cycling is needed. Also more cycling will have the effect of improving general – e.g. reduce obesity.
- We need to encourage vehicle conversions to electric as well as providing an infrastructure that supports electric vehicles. For example here in Dunedin, most residents could be using electric buses and/or simple electric cars. The distances are short.
- I agree strongly with the Discussion Document’s mention of electric vehicles. Electric technology does not just apply to the private cars, we also need to include electric bikes. There are many advantages of electric bikes over the electric car.
- I support low carbon home heating.

There are new opportunities at the local level that will reduce carbon emissions and allow New Zealand to reach its Climate Change Target. A distributed regional economy which gives resilience
to regions and community would reduce energy needs and provide employment locally based on local renewable resources. For example, an unfettered free market economy means that small shops shut as larger ones can sell them products more cheaply (because fossil fuel is still cheap). This disadvantages people living without cars. In Dunedin the central city hardware shop has shut and now the only places to go are in the south end of the city which is four bus zones (8 km) away from where I live. These changes depend on low cost fossil fuel and pass the costs to the consumer who pays in time and travel.

In addition to supporting most of the New Opportunities outlined on P 15, I refer you to the Green Party's suggestions for an effective climate action plan that is in their submission to this Consultation document.

Q5. How should New Zealand take into account the future uncertainties of technologies and costs when setting its target?

We need to foster innovation that is based on renewable generation technologies and not hold with the old sunset technologies that rely on fossil fuel extraction.

The government need to have plans and strategies that are laid out year by year so that we can achieve our targets by 2030.

The government needs to give clear signals to businesses so that they can pursue sustainable economic development models that are low carbon. Business need security to do this

1. This requires annual targets set by government NOW – so that businesses can have security to make the transition. The current targets are too far out and they will not assist with any transition.

2. It is essential that the government seek cross party support so that businesses have security across changing governments.

3. There needs to be much more emphasis on communication and working together between departments within the government. At the moment, every department has its budget and is siloed and operating independently. Climate Change will affect every department – from decisions around transportation, to food production.

4. We need a Government Body for Climate Change.

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Finally:-

You can fuel all of the people some of the time and fuel some of the people all of the time, but how can we fuel all of the the people all of the time?