

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?

What is most important to me is that our contribution is effective in reducing New Zealand's greenhouse gas emissions, so that we play an equitable part in the international effort to try and limit warming to 2 degrees.

I also wish to make the following comments...

The words "fair", "ambitious", "appropriately" and "long term" are all subjective and are not defined in this document.

New Zealand makes up 0.06% of the global population, our emissions are 0.15% of global emissions. Our current emissions are thus 2 ½ times the global average.

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?

The New Zealand economy, like that of all countries in the world, will be hugely damaged by climate change and ocean acidification if the world does not keep to the carbon budget as shown in figure 1, page 6 of the discussion document.

The most important thing about the level of the target New Zealand sets is that is an effective part of the global effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Regarding the "nature" of New Zealand's emissions, I note that a large proportion of New Zealand's current greenhouse gas emissions come from agriculture in the form of methane from livestock. The number of dairy cows in New Zealand has doubled in the last 20 years. Reducing the number of cows will reduce methane emissions.

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?

Table 1, page 7, estimates a cost of just over 2% for the average New Zealand household for a target of a 40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. This is a very reasonable cost to try and prevent what the document calls the "substantial environmental, economic and human impacts" if emissions continue on their current trajectory.

This discussion document does not include any information on the estimated costs to New Zealand households of

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climate change and ocean acidification.

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? An opinion on the likelihood of particular "opportunities" may be relevant for those seeking to invest money in particular business ventures, but for the average citizen it just becomes a guessing game.

Important opportunities that New Zealand should take advantage of include current technologies (such as using renewable energy to electrify the urban and national rail networks for both freight and passengers) in addition to new opportunities such as personal electric vehicles.

Summary

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

The future uncertainty of technologies and costs is not an issue that is unique to New Zealand and should not be used as an excuse for a weak target.

Other comments

6. Is there any further information you wish the Government to consider? Please explain.
The Fifth Assessment report of the IPCC summary for policy makers contains the following statement...

"Continued emission of greenhouse gases will cause further warming and long-lasting changes in all components of the climate system, increasing the likelihood of severe, pervasive and irreversible impacts for people and ecosystems. Limiting climate change would require substantial and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions which, together with adaptation, can limit climate change risks"

I would like the Government to consider the information in the IPCC report

http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/syr/AR5_SYR_FINAL_SPM.pdf

and set a minimum target of a 40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in 2030 compared to 1990 levels.