

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



Copy of your submission

Contact information

Name John Leenman

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?

The objectives are broadly useful however point 2 (Costs and impacts) ignore the costs of NOT taking the necessary (AND NOW MORE URGENT) steps to address climate change. Parity across "sectors" may in fact be unattainable (ie for domestic audiences). Agriculture is a high emitter and there may be only little that can be achieved here despite technological advances, however there are clearly opportunities within other sectors - vehicle fleet electrification and renewable electricity generation for example - where substantial reductions in emissions can be achieved at relatively little cost.

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?

As summarised in the discussion document, New Zealand has some particular challenges with respect setting reduced emissions targets. Nevertheless substantial reductions in emissions must occur to avoid a "4 degree" future. Given that the country's previous target of 5% reduction on 1990's levels by 2020 has fallen short (to say the least), we are (as are all developed and developing economies) now faced with the need to set much more ambitious targets for reduction.

My reading of the more recent climate science literature suggests a target for emissions reductions in the order of 40% of 1990 levels by 2050 is now unavoidable. Bold action is required from governments now, including our own.

How will our contribution affect New Zealanders?

3. What level of cost is appropriate for New Zealand to reduce it's greenhouse gas emissions? For example, what would be a reasonable reduction in annual household consumption?

This question is misleading, as a transfer of consumption to non-emitting products and activities is not included. The key question here is "What will be the cost of insufficient action to reduce emissions?" Failure to act effectively will likely result in much higher costs to the productive sectors of our economy, specifically agriculture and forestry (through droughts/floods), the low lying population centres around the country (sea level rise/severe weather events), and regions subject to more severe weather events such as the Coromandel Peninsula.

The answer to this question then must be, "We must pay whatever it costs to avoid a more than 2 degree world"

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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?

The very real constraints on the NZ agricultural sector suggest a focus on "Energy" and "Transport" may offer the most productive way forward. Supporting the "electrification" of roads through charge points for electric vehicles, reduction/removal of import tariffs on electric vehicles, including hybrid (electric/gas turbine) trucks (for short haul duties), increasing electric rail and light rail to reduce long haul freight forwarding and further developing biofuel through "fuel forests" can all make significant contributions to emissions reductions. Fuel forests would have the added benefit of acting as carbon sinks in the growing phase.

Energy is an obvious candidate. We have nearly 80% renewable electricity so there is still 20% to develop (Norway is nearly 100%). Recent developments in electricity storage, smart grid technologies etc may render large fossil fuel powers stations such as Huntly redundant in the foreseeable future - except as emergency generators. Costs of alternative energy generation (solar/wind) is now on (or below) par with grid supplied power. Thus further development of these technologies could substantially reduce the 22% contribution to emissions from the energy sector.

Summary

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

Future tech solutions will always be an unknown.

Some additional tech developments may assist in meeting critical emissions reductions. However there are already technological developments to hand that can have an immediate effect on emissions reductions. These include electric vehicles for personal transport, including electric van for city deliveries (eg Nissan e200), electric hybrid truck for recycling/rubbish (Wright speed), photovoltaics, wind, battery storage, etc.

Other comments

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

It is well understood that New Zealand's reliance on imported liquid fuel leaves the country vulnerable to supply constraints. Prioritising a move towards increasing energy independence (through alternative energy tech) will serve to both reduce that vulnerability as well as address the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (at least in part).