

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



Copy of your submission

Contact information

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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?

I do agree with the three objectives, particularly the third one relating to transforming the NZ economy towards a low-carbon world.

I feel that there should be an additional objective relating to the success of the global negotiations: the NZ contribution should be designed to maximise the chance of reaching a successful global agreement. Given the enormous costs and risks NZ faces from climate change, I think it would be appropriate for one of the objectives to recognize how much NZ has riding on the success of the negotiations.

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?

I agree that New Zealand has a somewhat unique emissions profile, and will therefore require a unique solution. I disagree with the view that this unique emissions profile justifies inaction. In line with objective #3, NZ should leverage its excellent, world-leading agricultural research to pursue technology to reduce agricultural emissions. Further reductions should be pursued in our road transport emissions through research and investment in low-emission/electric vehicles. This technology is already available, and given 80% of NZs power is from renewables, makes a lot of sense as an emissions reduction scheme.

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?

Any discussion of this issue must be in the context of what global inaction will cost NZ. I note that this figure is missing from the consultation document (which I found otherwise very informative).

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?

Electric vehicles seem almost inevitable, and early adoption in NZ could lead to high value economic activities. Another opportunity which is not listed is in agricultural technology. NZ is well established in this field, and with appropriate investment could develop technology to both reduce NZ emissions, and export to the world.

Summary

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Ministry for the
Environment
Manatū Mo Te Taiao

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

Predicting the future is hard. Two things I think are important to consider:

1. The cost of climate change to NZ is probably a very large number.
2. Technology always gets better and cheaper over time

I believe NZ should look at quantitative estimates of the cost of climate change, and invest accordingly in both global emissions reduction instruments and emissions reduction technology. NZ should take a precautionary approach to estimating future costs, and an ambitious approach to developing low emissions technology.

Other comments

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