

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



Copy of your submission

Contact information

Name Rebecca McMaster

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?

With regard to the objectives for the intended nationally determined contribution - I would urge a focus on what is the cost to not act 'appropriately'. The objectives for contribution seem to be focused solely on the cost of acting with no mention of the cost of inaction. It is widely accepted the longer we take to act appropriately the more difficult and therefore more costly our efforts will have to be. Please consider the cost of inadequate action.

We can hide behind the fact that we are a small percentage of global emissions (yet "in 2011 our emissions per capita were ranked at 22nd highest in the world and 6th in the OECD"

<http://www.mfe.govt.nz/sites/default/files/media/About/environment-bim-final.pdf>

) but as a small country we are viewed by our international peers as having the greatest ability for an agile and world leading response. We can utilise our unique position as an advantage. I urge the Government to follow this line of enquiry: how can we use our unique positions as an advantage to lead the world in a lower carbon future?

I ask you to adopt a minimum target of a 40% emissions reduction in net emissions below 1990 levels by 2030 – the minimum contribution required to keep us under 2 degrees global warming.

I request that you stop downplaying our responsibility for climate change saying New Zealand is too small to make a difference. It's not in our national character to sit on the fence and watch others get the job done.

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 ask you to adopt a minimum target of a 40% emissions reduction in net emissions below 1990 levels by 2030 – the minimum contribution required to keep us under 2 degrees global warming.

We have arguably more opportunities than challenges due to our greenhouse gas emissions profile. The Burwood Landfill Gas project is a good example. The Christchurch City Council invested in infrastructure to utilise methane from the Burwood Landfill facility to generate heat and electricity for some of its municipal requirements. This project has been a great ongoing success with significant co-benefits to all parties involved.

There seems to be a fairly obvious answer to the conundrum of nearly half of our greenhouse gas emissions coming from the agriculture sector, yet our forestry industry can't keep up with the demand of offsetting. Would it not make sense to invest in our forestry industry so we can see the co-benefits this would bring here in New Zealand? Why not limit the amount of farms being converted to dairy and provide incentives for more forestry that is bound to be more resilient to the effects of climate change that we are already seeing. With an increase in forestry we could also focus on adding value to the timber produced instead of shipping it directly overseas for other economies to benefit from.

New Zealanders are unique in their car transportation habits. According to Quentin D. Atkinson "one-third of car

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



Copy of your submission

trips are less than two kilometres and two-thirds are less than five kilometres". ("Carbon Neutral by 2020: How New Zealanders can tackle climate change", p13). I'm sure emissions from this source could be curbed with a smart social campaign. Something a little more inventive than car-less days perhaps? Kiwis simply aren't aware that their habits are not the norm and are directly impacting our greenhouse gas emissions.

The level of target we set should be an ambitious stretch. A goal with practical and measured application that defines sustainable development. The most generally accepted definition of sustainability is from the Brundtland Report: "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

The target we set should not be so shortsighted as to serve contemporary short-term gains (or restricted election cycle thinking) at the expense of our nation's prosperous future. I would demand that the targets set are determined not just by the Government but with cross-party and Māori input. Climate change is a universal issue that affects all sectors of the community. Our diverse communities simply aren't represented by the Government, as such these communities will not have a voice, and arguably these communities will be the ones impacted most by climate change. Please look to your parliamentary peers to assist you in order to best represent all New Zealand communities.

I'm disappointed that Māori were mentioned only once in this document. Māori should absolutely have a strong voice in this process. Māori have a unique and powerful perspective when it comes to climate change. The practice of kaitiakitanga (elements thereof are already recognised by the Resource Management Act), could be further embedded into our climate change toolkit. Some iwi look as far forward as seven generations into the future in their decision making processes to ensure they are fulfilling their guardianship requirements of the land and resources for future generations. I believe it would be beneficial for the Government to know, understand, respect and value these ideologies to influence the targets set and to have a better appreciation for what our indigenous culture can add to the mix.

Again, I would stress the need for a balanced adaptation and mitigation approach to reducing our emissions. I request that you stop downplaying our responsibility for climate change saying New Zealand is too small to make a difference. It's not in our national character to sit on the fence and watch others get the job done.

Carbon dioxide is the main driver of long-term climate change. The discussion document highlights that for a good chance of limiting warming to less than 2°C, the world can emit less than one trillion tonnes of CO2 from now on. At current rates of emissions, the world will blow this carbon budget by 2035. Regardless of what we do about other emissions from agriculture, every country ultimately needs to reduce CO2 emissions to zero to stop climate change and avoid blowing the global carbon budget. That means shifting from fossil fuels to clean energy and planting forests to absorb carbon. ?

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?

The Discussion Document states "Setting an international target means the economy will grow more slowly than it otherwise would". This statement seems to exclude two things:

1) the opportunity cost that climate change brings - innovation, research, design and technology (which the document seems to rely upon heavily in other areas of the report). 2) the cost of inaction. If we don't respond to an international target as soon as possible I would argue that the economy will suffer adverse effects - being hit just as hard financially by prolonging our active involvement in a low carbon economy. We must adapt if we want to be resilient and compete in international markets.

The Discussion Document seems to imply that the status quo is the best option. Please hear that New Zealanders do not support you on this perceived point of view.

The reverse of the statement: "More ambitious targets will have a higher cost" is not true. Less ambitious targets will have a lesser cost. They will in fact have a higher cost over time. The cost of inaction will be proven to be greater. I am not alone in thinking this.

I think New Zealand households would rather get on board with climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies (and costs) now, rather than wait for the exponential cost and urgency of uptake required later.

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



Copy of your submission

Kiwi households are already getting on board "Over half of all consumers will pay a bit more to ensure their products are sustainable" (Colmar Brunton Better Business Report, 2014)

http://www.colmarbrunton.co.nz/images/articles/Better_Business_FINALpptx.pdf

To suggest that NZ households will bear the full financial burden of climate change is also misleading. I am absolutely positive there are strategies for industry, government, enterprise to share this burden relative to their contributions to climate change/greenhouse gas emissions.

Personally I would, and already do, make choices in my household consumption to minimise the greenhouse gas emissions of my purchasing. I would wholeheartedly support this be implemented across the country at least for people within my income bracket.

An area that is not covered in this Discussion Document is the associated health costs of living in a world impacted by climate change. This is not only a personal cost to our population but more so to our Government in terms of the national health spend. Climate change will cause adverse health effects. This is already being witnessed. Moving to a low-carbon world will undoubtedly have positive gains in our health sector.

I ask you to adopt a minimum target of a 40% emissions reduction in net emissions below 1990 levels by 2030 – the minimum contribution required to keep us under 2 degrees global warming.

The Government consultation document treats action on climate change as a cost, whereas failure to take action is actually the cost. Treasury found that if New Zealand continues on its current trajectory of increasing emissions, the cost to taxpayers of even a modest 5% reduction target will be up to \$52 billion. The more we lower our emissions the more we will reduce this cost.

Responding to climate change is worth our while. The New Climate Economy Report released in 2014 by a team of internationally renowned economists, led by Lord Nicholas Stern, found that countries can improve their economic performance while cutting emissions. The Chair of the Bank of America, the head of the OECD, the World Bank, the Vice Chair of Deutsche Bank, and many others, endorsed this finding.

I request that you stop downplaying our responsibility for climate change saying New Zealand is too small to make a difference. It's not in our national character to sit on the fence and watch others get the job done.

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?

I think all options displayed in the discussion document are equally important for New Zealand. I do however think a few key perspectives have been left out.

We need to consider potential (and likely) health issues (and opportunities) with climate change. How can we minimise the impacts of climate change on our nation's health? Let's take a considered and informed approach to our health commitments for all New Zealanders, and particularly for lower socio-economic communities.

With climate change will come climate refugees. In fact I'm aware that we've already refused entry of climate refugees from Kiribati. I find this deplorable for our pacific neighbours. I realise this was one particular instance, however I'd like to think we will support our pacific neighbours with imminent rising sea levels and severe weather conditions.

This document is focused heavily on the economic impacts, I ask the government to consider the ethical and moral obligations we have. Let's establish a solid plan that future generations will be proud of and can continue to build upon. Let's give them a solid foundation.

I ask you to adopt a minimum target of a 40% emissions reduction in net emissions below 1990 levels by 2030 – the minimum contribution required to keep us under 2 degrees global warming.

Carbon dioxide is the main driver of long-term climate change. The discussion document highlights that for a good chance of limiting warming to less than 2°C, the world can emit less than one trillion tonnes of CO2 from now on.

At current rates of emissions, the world will blow this carbon budget by 2035. Regardless of what we do about other emissions from agriculture, every country ultimately needs to reduce CO2 emissions to zero to stop climate change and avoid blowing the global carbon budget. That means shifting from fossil fuels to clean energy and planting forests to absorb carbon. ?

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



Copy of your submission

Summary

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

I think the Government should take a balanced adaptation and mitigation approach to climate change especially considering technological uncertainties. We're smarter than putting all our eggs in one basket.

I think the Government should further invest in future problem solvers to tackle the ongoing issue of climate change. We should be embedding sustainability into the education curriculum and supporting more EnviroSchools. This will ensure we are equipping our kids with the tools to work through the increased impacts of climate change that they will face.

I ask you to adopt a minimum target of a 40% emissions reduction in net emissions below 1990 levels by 2030 – the minimum contribution required to keep us under 2 degrees global warming.

I request that you stop downplaying our responsibility for climate change saying New Zealand is too small to make a difference. It's not in our national character to sit on the fence and watch others get the job done.

Other comments

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

As outlined in the Discussion Document NZ currently has a target to reduce emissions five percent below 1990 levels by 2020. There is no mention in the document as to whether we are currently on track to meet this target. The online Climate Action Tracker projects that New Zealand is not on target to meet its target (<http://climateactiontracker.org/countries/newzealand>). As a New Zealander I am embarrassed to note that China, the United States of America, and Australia are ahead of us in their targets.

The Climate Action Tracker rates our targets as "inadequate". The Climate Action Tracker (CAT) is an independent scientific analysis produced by four research organisations tracking climate action and global efforts towards the globally agreed aim of holding warming below 2°C, since 2009.

I also note that in the Ministry for the Environment Briefing for Incoming Ministers 2014 document: "New Zealand has a long term target of reducing its net emissions to 50% below 1990 levels by 2050. However, our gross emissions have increased by 25% since 1990, and are projected to rise substantially in the time to 2050, based on current settings." <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/sites/default/files/media/About/environment-bim-final.pdf>

This statement suggests to me that we require a new and more ambitious approach to reducing our emissions as the current action plan is clearly not leading us towards our targets effectively. In fact the challenge is going to be more difficult the longer it takes us to implement a plan that begins to show net emissions reductions.

This assumes there is an action plan in place to reach this target, because a goal without a plan is just a dream.

The UK Climate Change Act provides a model for government commitment and accountability that New Zealand should adopt. This Act puts national emissions targets in domestic law (which is not the case in New Zealand) and requires every government to produce credible plans to meet these. This will show other countries we are serious. The Act also sets up an independent Climate Commission to advise government on its policies and hold whoever is in power accountable. This makes the issue of climate change less politicised by having an authoritative independent voice in the debate.

The discussion document states that "New Zealand already has one of the highest levels of renewable electricity generation in the world. So unlike many nations, our electricity sector has less potential to reduce emissions further." I find this to be a very leading statement. While we have less "potential" to reach 100% renewable electricity generation, given that we are approximately 20% away from this target. I would argue we have a greater opportunity and a stronger foundation to build upon to get us 100% renewable energy generation. This is an instance when our size and agility is benefit not a barrier. I would strongly urge the government to consider moving towards 100% renewable energy generation for New Zealand.

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



Copy of your submission

The Discussion Document implies that the NZ Government are solely focused on awaiting technological innovation(s) to reduce emissions in the agricultural sector. This seems like a wholly naive approach. It is generally accepted that we need a dual approach of adaptation and mitigation to minimise the largest climate change risks. Relying solely on technology to solve this problem is inefficient.

The Discussion document outlines that the world is going to require more food with projected population growth - 70% more food by 2050. If agriculture is in fact "key to New Zealand's economic success" I would urge the implementation of a plan that takes into account the projected impacts of climate change particular to New Zealand (widely available by many Crown Research Institutes). Planning according to projected impacts and robust climate models would see us investing in the areas of agriculture and food production that we can sustain in the long-term. Thus ensuring that the New Zealand economy can continue to benefit from our agricultural industry. This plan could have infinite benefits if paired with more ambitious environmental protection management system. This could start with a more robust and ambitious Resource Management Act that is more strictly upheld. I'd like to see an ambitious plan for adaptation and mitigation in the agricultural sector balanced with an environmental plan for New Zealand that benefits from agricultural production (rather than being adversely affected by it).

Will we continue to be lead by insurance costs and therefore risk levels for developing areas that are projected to be impacted by climate change? Surely we can move ahead of this insurance curve. The information is readily available, let's use it wisely. I'd like to see this taken into greater account in rebuilding Christchurch city.

As Hon Tim Groser outlines in the Foreward of the Discussion Document I will look forward to an ongoing dialogue on domestic policies on how to achieve our INDCs. I hope it is obvious to the Government that New Zealanders are concerned about climate change and how we as a nation will engage with it. This should be obvious in the high numbers of attendees to MFE Consultation Meetings up and down the country, with many venues needing to be changed in order to match overwhelming public response.

The Discussion Document demands that are target(s) represent "fair and ambitious actions towards the global solution".

It is my opinion that what the Government is suggesting in the Discussion Document is certainly not ambitious. I urge the Government to commit to ambitious targets that are backed by robust national policy paired with the appropriate management and reporting systems.

I agree with the World Resources Institute on What makes a good INDC

"Well-designed INDCs will signal to the world that the country is doing its part to combat climate change and limit future climate risks. Countries should follow a transparent process when preparing their INDC in order to build trust and accountability with domestic and international stakeholders. A good INDC should be ambitious, leading to transformation in carbon-intensive sectors and industry; transparent, so that stakeholders can track progress and ensure countries meet their stated goals; and equitable, so that each country does its fair share to address climate change. It is important that INDCs be clearly communicated so domestic and international stakeholders can anticipate how these actions will contribute to global emissions reductions and climate resilience in the future. An INDC should also articulate how the country is integrating climate change into other national priorities, such as sustainable development and poverty reduction, and send signals to the private sector to contribute to these efforts."

It is important to me that New Zealand puts forward an ambitious, transparent and equitable INDC to do its fair share to limit future climate risks. This can not be done in isolation from national and international priorities and needs to be combined with a robust action plan for achieving these intended contributions.

I believe that we as New Zealanders want to see these 'intended' contributions met or exceeded rather than tabled and shelved with very little action.

I ask you to adopt a minimum target of a 40% emissions reduction in net emissions below 1990 levels by 2030 – the minimum contribution required to keep us under 2 degrees global warming.

It's time for us to do the right thing again. We were the first to give women the vote. We stood behind our Pacific neighbours in rejecting nuclear testing. Now's our chance to create a climate plan that New Zealanders can be proud to stand behind, and that starts with a target of reducing emissions by at least 40% by 2030.

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



Copy of your submission

Carbon dioxide is the main driver of long-term climate change. The discussion document highlights that for a good chance of limiting warming to less than 2°C, the world can emit less than one trillion tonnes of CO₂ from now on. At current rates of emissions, the world will blow this carbon budget by 2035. Regardless of what we do about other emissions from agriculture, every country ultimately needs to reduce CO₂ emissions to zero to stop climate change and avoid blowing the global carbon budget. That means shifting from fossil fuels to clean energy and planting forests to absorb carbon. ?

I request a moratorium on the opening of all new coal mines and fossil fuel extraction including a moratorium on fracking. An immediate end to all government subsidies, tax breaks and incentives for the fossil fuel extraction industries.

I request the establishment of an Independent Climate Commission to ensure honest reporting of our emissions and compliance with our own emissions targets.

I request a massive education programme to raise public education on climate change and the need for a transition to a low carbon economy.