Response to the consultation on New Zealand’s Climate Change Contributions
24th May 2015

To the Ministry for the Environment.

Thank you very much for the opportunity of commenting on New Zealand’s Climate Change Contributions. The following are my responses to the questions.

QUESTIONS:

Q1  (a) Do you agree with the above objectives for our contribution?
Yes – with the following provisions:
Fairness is seen in the context of NZ’s historical emissions, that all sections of society are treated fairly, and that we move into a new green economy with long term zero emissions.

(b) What is most important to you?
Point 1 is most important – that we achieve the needed protection of our environment on which our long term survival depends. Climate Change needs to be treated as a security risk as outlined by the US Pentagon and the G7 report “New Climate for Peace”.

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

The basic requirement is that we set a target to be within our global budget as in question 1. The subsequent question is how we restructure our economy to meet the target, in the light of our current emissions. We need to take advantage of new opportunities in simpler lifestyles and cleaner technologies and as demonstrated by the “New Climate Economy Report”

Q3 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?

In the context of setting the target within the global budget, we need information on the benefits of renewing the economy, and if necessary, the costs of not achieving the budget. Assumptions of costs should be reconsidered in the light of the experience of Denmark which is finding that its 2050 carbon neutral target can be achieved with little cost, and no loss to business competitiveness. Any costs should be spread around the economy, and away from those least able to tolerate them.

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

Items 1 & 3: Energy efficiency and oil price independence are most likely, and act to some extent already.

Items 4 & 5: are the most important for NZ’s long term future.
The Business Growth Agenda needs to be embedded in the climate change program.
See: The “New Climate Economy Report”

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

NZ should take a precautionary approach, recognising that the costs of inadequate action may be very high. In selecting technologies, a risk management approach, with as clear as possible understanding of the risks of each option. Bearing in mind that the value of any technology is more in the way that it is used, rather than in the technology itself. The simplicity of community centred approaches may also be beneficial in many situations.

A critical ‘technology’ is peace, both domestic and international. An environment of conflict, particularly military conflict, imposes enormous costs, and may make a solution to climate change impossible. NZ needs to make a major investment in developing peaceful relations amongst nations, demonstrating its own integrity, promoting integrity amongst others, and practising cooperation and sharing in every respect.
The following members of the Tauranga Quaker group support the response to the climate change consultation on the reverse side.

William Vernon Robinson

Beryl Ann Kile

Alan Reynolds

Sue Reynolds

Gray Sommerville