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

Copy of your submission

Contact information

Name   John Milnes
Organisation (if applicable)
Address
Telephone
Email

Objectives for the contribution

Do you agree with these objectives for our contribution?  No

1b. What is most important to you?
That we do everything we can that has been actively ignored by successive governments since Global warming was identified. Governments have been very selfish in concerning themselves about the present and ignoring future generations who will have to live with climate change conditions with little hope of changing them. It is not a legacy I would want in my name.

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 Nicholas Stern said 8 years ago that it is cheaper to do something now than later. It still holds true now, so the economy will recover the sooner we do something.
See selfish Govts above.

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? These semantics about figures are only to find the least this Govt needs to do.

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? Aotearoa/New Zealand needs, must urgently reduce our emissions to 40% below 1990 levels.

Summary

5. How should New Zealand take into account the future uncertainties of technologies and costs when setting its target?
We must operate to mitigate for the worst case scenario and reduce our emissions as mentioned above. A carbon tax should have been introduced by 2000, which would have mostly eliminated the rip offs with the ETS.

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

It is encouraging to see the government is proposing to do something positive about climate change. It is more than disconcerting to see the way that governments around the world have been procrastinating about this issue, so often putting economic reasons to the fore over concern about the future, and future generations. For our children and grandchildren to have some sort of future, we must urgently take major steps to reduce our emissions to 40% below 1990 levels.

Even if the monetary costs of doing this are high, it is nothing compared to the cost of not doing anything.

We, as citizens of Aotearoa/New Zealand and the world must acknowledge that whatever needs to be done, is done and show the World that Aotearoa/New Zealand does what it knows is of the utmost importance. To use a phrase from a different era and a very different issue, TINA, There Is No Alternative. This is probably more true for climate change than for what it was originally used for.

Lord Nicholas Stern made the point about 8 years ago that the sooner we start mitigating CO2 emissions, the less the economic costs and the less the environmental damage.

It is becoming painfully obvious that some of the predicted effects of climate change are beginning to appear, floods and droughts are more common and severe; cyclones are also more common and severe. These seem to be global warming related to and occurring with currently less than 1 degree centigrade warming. We cannot afford to ignore this any further.

What things can Aotearoa/New Zealand do?

Every decision that is made, from accepting another supermarket bag, to building new motorways must be examined for their effects on CO2 emissions. For example, motorways have a very large effect, from the emissions made during construction to the ongoing emissions from the increased vehicle use, plus the downstream slowing of traffic in the city caused by the larger number of vehicles coming into the city.

Some things I feel we must do:

- Oil exploration must be stopped.
- Coal mining must cease.
- Building Light rail for Auckland and other cities where buses can't move as many people as efficiently.
- Increased research into areas where emission savings can be made, farming in particular.
- Facilitating solar energy production, photovoltaic and hot water, with low or zero interest loans.
- Setting a compulsory buy back rate for photovoltaic to encourage uptake to eliminate thermal power stations (Huntly). This could hopefully pre-empt loss of hydro because of reduced snow and shrinking glaciers.

Astronomers have been studying the cosmos looking for planets that may be able to support life. They have identified very few planets among the many they have found that are something akin to ours. They have named the orbits these planets inhabit the “Goldilocks zone”, because the conditions to support life are “Just right”. The point I’m making is that we inhabit one of these rare planets in the Goldilocks zone around a suitable star and also the other conditions necessary to support life just happen to be on this particular planet. Scientists who understand biological science will tell you these conditions are in a fine balance on Earth and any change in conditions can tip the balance to who knows where. So it is critical that we preserve the Goldilocks balance.

We sorted the chlorofluorocarbon issue and are now beginning to see the ozone hole retreating. Although the CO2 issue is larger, it is solvable and as an inhabitant of this planet I’m prepared to reduce my CO2 footprint, but it needs Aotearoa/New Zealand and the nations of the world to pull together.

Aotearoa / New Zealand has led the world on other issues and there is no reason we can't do it again.