

## Climate Change Contribution Consultation

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First, it is most important that whatever target New Zealand sets, it is able to legislate however it needs, to achieve that. The TPPA must not be signed by New Zealand, as it will place the government in the position of being unable to legislate to make the necessary changes without corporations expecting compensation for how the new legislation increases their costs.

Trade agreements may be very important, however. New Zealand could suggest a trade agreement with other countries that set similarly ambitious targets, with more access to our markets the lower their emissions actually become.

There is no mention in the discussion document of a target that is adequate to actually halt climate change and restore the world's climate. This is unacceptable. With New Zealand's privileged economic position, history of high ghg emissions, resource-rich land and small, educated, innovative and internationally-aware population, New Zealand is perfectly placed to lead the world by setting a target that will actually leave our children with a world worth living in.

New Zealand should be aiming to become a net sink for carbon, and stop being a carbon emitter. In terms of the 1990 levels of emissions from New Zealand, unless we set and achieve the target of less than 10% of those levels, (that is, a reduction of more than 90%) we will be contributing to climate change, and ruining our world.

The target levels mentioned in the discussion document (eg 5% or 40% below 1990 levels) are morally repugnant to me.

To achieve the target of becoming a net carbon sink, radical changes to every aspect of our economy will be required, and if well managed, will improve the lives of many. The earlier we start, the easier the transition will be, and the more options we will have.

As the discussion document doesn't even come close to mentioning targets that will halt climate change, I can only surmise that the policy is based on "let the rich enjoy their wealth for as long as they can, at least, and if they get rich enough, they may be able to protect their offspring in fortified enclaves." What this viewpoint misses is that they will be unable to do so once the resource wars come to our shores. New Zealand's only chance of surviving climate change is by leading the world in halting it.

### **Objectives for the contribution**

**1a** The objectives read reasonably well. I will not be counted as someone who supports the objectives, as they are not explicit enough. I will also not be counted as someone who is opposed to them, as this may be interpreted as my being a climate-change denier, and I am not that.

The **first objective** is weak as the targets mentioned in the discussion document are neither fair nor ambitious. How New Zealand would be seen with such targets is simply "hypocritical" and "greedy". With an emissions target set at zero, the objective could read:

"Our contribution is fair and ambitious, and we challenge the rest of the privileged world to meet

it.”

The **second objective** is weak because it ignores the costs and impacts of not acting. How a wholesale reduction in ghg emissions is to be managed will depend in large part on the competency of our government (and its willingness to ignore commercial pressures). Objective two could read:

“Costs and impacts of climate change are too great to consider. The costs of becoming a net carbon sink instead of a carbon emitter will be minimised by making this change as soon as possible.”

The **third objective** is weak due to the words “long term”. The sooner the climate change is brought into control, the lower the costs will be. Objective three should therefore read:

“It must guide New Zealand in immediate action to enable the country to become a net carbon sink as soon as possible.”

**1b** The most important objective to me is objective three, as our policy must include mechanisms to allow the target to be met.

**2** New Zealand's position as a resource-rich sparsely-populated country that has historically emitted excessive ghg volumes to enable us to reach our privileged economic position puts us in the position of needing to lead the world in reducing our ghg emissions to well below the per capita amount required to halt climate change. In addition, New Zealanders are well-educated, internationally-aware, historically able to work together for the greater good, and, being a small population, are able to radically innovate and change our lifestyle without the hardship other, larger populations with more sluggish momentum would experience. This is how our particular economy needs to change:

**Dairy** I see no ethical reason to continue New Zealand's preoccupation with extracting more and more profit from our land in the form of dairy products. Dairy products are not the food that the world requires. There are many studies showing how other forms of food are far more efficient at feeding the world, and of course the obsession with profit is driving intensification which is ruining New Zealand's soils and waterways. This cannot be continued. The first radical change to reduce our ghg emissions must be to radically reduce our dairy industry, and to adopt other low ghg emission, unpolluting forms of land use.

**Transport** As a New Zealander trying to reduce my transport carbon footprint, I have had no encouragement from the values of mainstream society nor from government policy, which continues to ignore “local living” initiatives in the economy and to subsidise the use of the individual motorcar with publically funded roads and with the environmental, social and healthcare costs associated with individual motorcar use not properly funded by car users. Free public transport, an immediate halt in funding of roads and a legislation change that effectively slashes private car use is required to reduce our carbon emissions from transport. A wholesale re-education programme needs to highlight the harm done by “bucket list” travel aspirations, by commuters in private cars and by trucks moving unnecessary material goods. Thus, the second radical change required to reduce our ghg emissions must be to radically reduce our materialism, overseas travel and obsession with the private car, and to adopt other more healthy, meaningful lifestyles.

**Soils** Agricultural soils can be immediately improved as carbon sinks if New Zealand adopted a more organic and sustainable approach to land use. Sustainable traditional farming practices exist, plenty of scientific knowledge is available for modern sustainable farming practices involving mixed forestry and growing carbon-rich soil. To continue with conventional, chemical, soil-eroding

farming practices is short-sighted and ignorant. Thus, the third radical change required to reduce our ghg emissions must be to radically change our land-use practices to enable our land to be a carbon sink, not a ghg emitter.

**Housing** With net emissions reduced to zero, New Zealand will need to finish its honeymoon with large houses. The resources required for building and maintaining large houses are too great. The good news is that there is no link between large houses and happiness.

**3** The level of cost is simply whatever it takes. The cost of not reducing our ghg emissions and not halting climate change will always be higher. The cost should not be borne per household, but primarily by the rich, who have benefited from generations of privilege as a result of New Zealand's historical ghg emitting development, and of the first world's exploitation of the third world. The good news for the rich is that there is more happiness in a society with a smaller gap between rich and poor, and there is no link between wealth and happiness, except where real poverty exists.

**4** Innovation occurs following legislative change so what is “most likely to occur” is highly dependent on government policy – a prime example being the rapid development in the US of efficient lightbulbs following legislative change that outlawed the incandescent lightbulb. Currently, innovators of sustainable low ghg emitting practices and products are being stifled. They cannot compete in the market, as their polluting competitors are not paying for their pollution climate-altering emissions. Immediate polluter-pays legislation will drive New Zealand companies to innovate. A real opportunity here is in becoming world leaders in sustainable engineering and design.

**5** The uncertainties of technologies and costs pale into significance next to the uncertainties of the impacts of climate change and the costs of not taking action to halt it. Our target must be to become a net carbon sink. In setting an upper level, New Zealand should simply look at the ghg emissions level that will restore the climate to acceptable levels, calculate what that means for New Zealand based on a per capita amount, and decrease that due to our history of ghg emissions that have put us in a developed, privileged position. This means the upper level would be at least 90% below 1990 levels. Any ghg emission target that is higher than this is simply unethical.

**6** The comparisons with others section on page 11 is shameful; it is simply a thinly-veiled excuse to increase our target. There is no justification for considering only carbon dioxide and ignoring methane. As stated in wikipedia, “some gases such as methane are known to have large indirect effects that are still being quantified”. There is no justification for comparing the actions of countries based on the equivalent costs. There is no justification for comparing New Zealand in this section only with other highly polluting countries – the US, Australia and the European Union. The discussion document should include comparison with the low-emitting exploited countries of the Third World. Without that comparison, the discussion document is highly unbalanced.