

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



Copy of your submission

Contact information

Name Miriam Odlin

Organisation (if applicable)

Address [REDACTED]

Telephone [REDACTED]

Email [REDACTED]

Objectives for the contribution

Do you agree with these objectives for our contribution? No

1b. What is most important to you?

I agree with objectives 1 and 3 but object to the implication of the 2nd objective which is that we won't do it if it costs anything.

Important to me is wilderness, biodiversity and a belief that our species can tread lightly on this planet if we chose to.

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?

40% below 1990 levels would be a fair target from an international perspective. The discussion document for this target consultation says that we have a harder job of reducing our emissions because nearly half of our emissions come from agriculture and we already have a lot of renewable electricity generation. I would argue that it is easier for us than nearly any other country. My reasoning:

- we currently have one of the highest per capita levels of emissions
- we have a country with an abundance of renewable energy (more so than most other countries on the planet) that is easily converted to both baseload (geothermal and hydro) and intermittent (wind, solar) electricity generation. We should be able to get to 100% renewable. For those countries that depend heavily on fossil fuels for electricity that is largely because they have much higher population density and no other alternatives (apart from Nuclear). Surely it is easier for us to diversify our agricultural mainstay than for them to find other sources of electricity.
- as just mentioned above, we just converted massive tracts of the country to dairy farming in the course of the last 20 years. It can't be that hard to convert it back out. We can do more than dairying and I am sure if the real costs were internalised, pioneering kiwis would come up with lots of other ideas.
- developing countries have a much harder job of curbing emissions than countries like us that already have electricity in every house, loads of imported goods and high vehicle ownership.
- most other civilised countries already have something resembling a public transport system and a culture of self-propulsion (walking and cycling) allowing for fewer gains there. We have lots of low hanging fruit there (from an international perspective) which could make a significant dint in our emissions.

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?

As frequently pointed out... why are the costs of not doing anything mentioned here. This is a facetious argument.

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When you chose a course of action, you cannot compare the outcome with the imaginary alternative. Projections of what a climate gas target will 'cost' us are not only bound to be inaccurate but they are a form of scaremongering and statistical manipulation with zero accountability - the projections will never be proven right or wrong.

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? In order of size: agriculture, energy, transport. Consistently internalise the cost of activities and where appropriate subsidise alternatives in order to get them over the line. Include agriculture in the ETS or de-incentivise industries that negatively affect our ability to meet targets to a level that means we naturally meet those targets. Transfer spending from roads to public transport until public transport is faster and as cheap. When the masses and the culture finally swings over to predominantly sharing transportation, the spending on infrastructure will pay itself off and the long term cost will be lower. The inconvenience of sitting in traffic as the train shoots past is a great leveller and affects the rich as much as the poor.

Summary

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

The ideal that technology will solve the problem is a falsehood. In NZ with existing technology we can make massive gains. Globally, we have to look at the two big translucent elephants: economic and population growth. These two factors are directly linked to pollution, climate gas emissions and a host of other social ills.

Other comments

6. Is there any further information you wish the Government to consider? Please explain. Stop making excuses. It is easier for us than most other countries to reduce our emissions so get cracking.