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Climate Change Contribution Consultation  
Ministry for the Environment  
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## Climate Change Contribution Consultation

I make this submission to my government. The government that has been democratically elected by the citizens of New Zealand. I ask you the politicians, ministers and public servants to show COURAGE in setting a target for emissions reductions as part of our international contribution. Please show COURAGE and LEADERSHIP to face what is truly a massive challenge, but one that we must succeed in.

To deny that the climate is changing is scientifically, morally and ethically irresponsible. To deny that humans are responsible for most of this change is also scientifically, morally and ethically irresponsible. We humans, as the most destructive, but also the most intelligent species on this planet must ACT NOW, globally to change the course on which we're heading. Currently this course will take us beyond 2°C of climate warming. Such a course is already wreaking havoc on us, our societies, the environment we depend on for our lives and the economies we require to function. Unless we all ACT BOLDLY NOW things will only get worse.

For far too long it has been clear that we must act. But politicians from countries around the world, not just New Zealand have failed to act with courage or show leadership. For the most part it has been individuals who have taken their own actions to try and reduce their impact on the climate. Cycling to work, changing their light bulbs, composting their kitchen scraps. But it's not enough.

People are frustrated. People are angry. I attended the public meeting in Dunedin on the evening of Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2015. When people spoke, and throughout the venue as a whole you could feel the passion, the tension, the frustration and the anger from people of all ages and cultures. A young boy who must have been 8 or 10, an older lady well past retirement, Maori, Pakeha, people from overseas, mothers, single people, blue collar, white collar, beneficiary, academic, retired. People are tired of the excuses of our government – NZ is so small, we're unique because of our livestock emissions, we have lots of renewable electricity. People are frustrated and angry with our government's inaction. People are concerned. People are concerned about their future, their children's futures, the future of our and the world's biodiversity. Some people are questioning whether to even have children. The feeling of anger and frustration was unanimous at the public meeting. Everyone has had enough. It's time for COURAGE. It's time for LEADERSHIP.

AS AN ABSOLUTE MINIMUM NEW ZEALAND MUST SET A TARGET OF A 40% REDUCTION IN GROSS EMISSIONS (VERSUS 1990 LEVELS) BY 2030.

This is an absolute minimum for the world to have a chance of keeping climate warming below 2°C.

We need COURAGE from you the politicians, you the ministers and you the public servants for us to achieve this. We need COURAGE ourselves. We need you the politicians, ministers and public servants to show LEADERSHIP that will give every New Zealander the COURAGE they need to succeed.

Failure is not an option.

Think for a moment about a couple of New Zealand's greatest heroes. Edmund Hillary and Kate Sheppard. These people are our heroes because of what they achieved. And they achieved these things because they had great COURAGE. They dared to do something that had never been done. They dared to do something people said couldn't be done. We need that same COURAGE now. Everyone, you and I we need COURAGE. Set the target - A 40% REDUCTION IN GROSS EMISSIONS (VERSUS 1990 LEVELS) BY 2030. Set the target and I'll meet it with you.

To the discussion document "*New Zealand's Climate Change Target*". I would like to make the following comments:

#### Agriculture

On Page 3 in the Foreword it is stated that "around half our emissions come from the agricultural sector.....reducing emissions in this sector is challenging....the world needs more food....agriculture is key to New Zealand's economic success.

On Page 5 in Box 1 it is stated that "Some sectors, including forestry, farming and fishing, are especially vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

Surely, if "agriculture is key to New Zealand's economic success" but farming is "especially vulnerable to the effects of climate change". Then isn't the obvious thing to do either or both of:

- Reduce New Zealand's dependence on agriculture for economic success, by investing in and developing in other key areas.
- Reduce climate change impacts by acting as soon as possible to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

New Zealand needs to commit to doing both of these things NOW.

## Forests

On Page 10 it is stated that “New Zealand is on track to meet its current 2020 target through a mix of ...use of forestry sinks...”. But on Page 8 the document states that “In the next 15 years much of this forest is expected to be harvested...meaning that these forests will no longer provide a significant carbon sink”. This contradicts the statement on Page 10 and suggests that actually New Zealand is not on track to meet its current 2020 target at all!

## The Target

On Page 12, Q2. asks “What do you think the nature of New Zealand’s emissions and economy means for the level of the target that we set?”

This question is back to front! Firstly, the target we MUST set MUST ensure that the climate does not warm by more than 2°C. Secondly, that target MUST then define the nature of New Zealand’s emissions and economy.

New Zealand MUST set a target that ensures that the climate does not warm by more than 2°C. Failure to do that will result in significant negative impacts on our economy, which brings me to my next point.

## The Economy

The discussion document provides some details of the costs to households of setting various emissions reduction targets. But the document fails to provide details of the cost to households of not setting a target, or what the costs might be to households if the climate warms by 2°C or 3°C or even 4°C. Only one side of the economic picture is presented by the document and so it is a very poor economic analysis. I recommend that the government determine the costs to households of not setting AN ABSOLUTE MINIMUM TARGET OF A 40% REDUCTION IN GROSS EMISSIONS (VERSUS 1990 LEVELS) BY 2030.

However, the economic analysis that is done in the document is interesting. On Page 13 of the document it states that “with no target for after 2020, New Zealand’s national income is projected to grow from 2014 levels...to around \$299 billion in 2027”.

Firstly, a question. Does this projection factor in the costs to our national economy due to increasing climate change severity due to not setting a target?

Secondly, the document continues “If New Zealand took a target of 5 per cent below 1990 levels by 2030, then national income in 2027 could be \$3.5 billion less.....a target of 10 per cent...an additional \$200 million per annum.....a target of 20 per cent...an additional \$500 million”. This suggests that for a cost of \$4 billion (\$3.5 billion plus \$500 million), or approximately 1.33% of national income (\$4 billion divided by \$299 billion) a target of a 20 per cent reduction could be achieved.

This is a bargain compared to the cost of not setting a target! Even assuming a 40% reduction target costs \$5 billion this is still less than 2% of national income, an absolute bargain compared to suffering the impacts of climate change and risking the negative impacts on our economy because of it.

For \$1,800 per annum per household I would JUMP at the opportunity to meet AN ABSOLUTE MINIMUM TARGET OF A 40% REDUCTION IN GROSS EMISSIONS (VERSUS 1990 LEVELS) BY 2030! I would pay even more than that if it means we can keep climate warming below 2°C. Warming above this level is likely to have catastrophic affects on our and the global economy and environment. Effects that will be terribly costly both economically and socially. \$1,800 per annum per household is no cost at all compared to what we stand to lose! YOU MUST ACT BOLDLY!

### Opportunities

Page 15 of the discussion document lists a number of opportunities and “longer-term benefits”. These sound great!

- Saving households money
- Increasing energy security
- Reducing vulnerability to oil price volatility
- Improved health, environmental and social well-being
- Improved erosion control and water quality
- Remaining economically competitive

Compared to the above opportunities, the do nothing / do very little option seems like madness. There is a lot we can gain by having the courage to tackle climate change. We will lose a great deal if we don't.

Please, let's pursue these opportunities by reducing our GROSS EMISSIONS 40% BELOW 1990 LEVELS BY 2030.

### Domestic Policies

Page 16 of the document discusses domestic policies. I congratulate the government for your pledge to work with us the public of New Zealand to develop any policies that could help us meet our international target. I'd like to recommend a few that you should focus on to start with:

- END FOSSIL FUEL SUBSIDIES! DO NOT PROVIDE INCENTIVES TO COMPANIES TO EXPLORE FOR FOSSIL FUELS IN NEW ZEALAND! Subsidising fossil fuel exploration works against our international target and any domestic policies we set to meet it.
- END OFF-SHORE / ON-SHORE FOSSIL FUEL EXPLORATION BLOCK OFFERS. These also work against our international target.
- User / polluter pays taxation – it's about being fair.

- Develop policies that encourage the uptake of domestic electricity generation (e.g. roof solar, wind etc). This will encourage householders to become energy producers! You must:
  - Ensure fair sell prices for small/household electricity generators.
  - Make it easier for households to purchase and connect generation to the grid.
- Set higher minimum standards for the energy efficiency of new homes. The existing standards are set very low.

There are many more policies that will be required and I look forward to working with the government to develop and adopt these.

So finally, I ask that you have COURAGE and show great LEADERSHIP and set AN ABSOLUTE MINIMUM TARGET OF A 40% REDUCTION IN GROSS EMISSIONS (VERSUS 1990 LEVELS) BY 2030.

Kia kaha,

Jared Oliver

New Zealander

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Concerned global citizen