

Ministry for the Environment

Wellington

June 3rd 2015

To whom this may concern

My name is Maria Peach and I am a training public health registrar doctor in New Zealand. Climate change poses one of the biggest threats to human health within New Zealand and around the world. The Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate change, the body of scientists who have provided scientific evidence of the dangers of passing 2 degrees Celsius of global warming, are urging all governments to reduce their carbon emissions to avoid heading into catastrophic temperatures. We must take heed to their advice and commit to reduction of greenhouse gases. Anything less is a neglect of our country's responsibility to protect the health of its citizens.

The Intended Nationally Determined Contribution objectives fail to look at the cost of inaction on climate change. The cost of inaction, is greater than the cost of climate action. Our greenhouse gas emissions are contributing to changing weather patterns that are seen all around the world. Storms and floods are intensifying, droughts are occurring more frequently. In the Cook Islands, during a period commonly known in the islands to be the 'cyclone' season, Rarotonga witnessed a long drought. This affected crops, plantations and the water supply on the island. One need not be reminded of the devastation Vanuatu experienced, that wiped out all of the agriculture, destroying food supplies, water sanitation and increasing the risk for infectious diseases.

New Zealand must aim for a zero emission economy and society by 2050. All sectors must aim to utilise clean energy. New Zealand must commit to improving public transport and providing alternative modes that do not contribute further to carbon emissions. We require energy efficient homes and a reduction of emissions within the agricultural sector.

We have a global responsibility to reduce our emissions and must share the costs and benefits equally and fairly between countries and within New Zealand. New Zealand must aim to reduce at least 40% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 compared to those in 1990 and to at least 95% by 2050. Many of the Pacific Islands have aimed for the use of 100% renewable energies by 2050. Here are the small island nations most effected by climate change, leading the way in the use of alternative sources. We contribute far greater emissions and therefore are obligated to end the use of fossil fuels. Therefore further fossil fuel exploration must stop with no more oil permits being granted and extraction must be phased out in the next decade.

Acting on climate change requires political will. It requires cross –party commitment. It requires laws and policies that put the health and well-being of citizens that will be effected by climate change, ahead of profit. It requires mitigation policies are done in consultation with tangata whenua, with Māori, kaitiakitanga of these lands, to ensure climate change

action does not widen health inequities of Māori. It requires our country take a pro-active position to a carbon free society by 2050. If our action is delayed, the consequences maybe devastating for everyone.

Kind Regards

Dr Maria Peach