

SUBMISSION ON NEW ZEALAND CLIMATE CHANGE TARGET DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

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My submission on the New Zealand Climate Change Discussion Document is:

1. The discussion document rightfully points out that actions to limit global temperature increase to no more than 2 degrees Celcius is not strong enough.
2. In my opinion the proposed action is not strong enough at either a national level or international level.
3. The setting of New Zealand's post 2020 climate change target(s) is an opportunity for New Zealand to commit to a programme of strong action; of doing enough, of being a world leader.
4. The environmental, social and economic cost of either doing nothing or not doing enough to keep the global temperature increase at no more than 2 degrees is very significant.
5. One of the most significant flaws in the this discussion document is the failure to seriously discuss the consequences and costs of either doing nothing or not doing enough.
6. Sadly this appears to be a deliberate action to undermine the consultation process.
7. For example, the Minister of Climate Change made it clear in recent answers in Parliament that the intention was that the Treasury assessment of the substantial costs of doing nothing should be kept from the public.
8. Another example. The discussion document, on page 14, sets out the impact of different targets on an annual household consumption in 2027. These estimates were derived from in Infometrics report *A General Equilibrium Analysis if Options for New Zealand's post-202 Climate Change Contribution* dated 13 April 2015.
9. The discussion document does not mention that the comparison is between estimated household income without climate change occurring and estimated household income of different specified carbon dioxide reduction levels.
10. Although the baseline scenario reviewed by Infometrics is that there is no action to reduce emissions by any country, one of the assumptions stated on page 4 of the report is:
Given time and budget constraints, the scope of this research does not include any analysis of:

1. The net impacts of New Zealand's greenhouse gas emissions on climate change and what the economic and social effects of a changing climate may be.

11. The failure to report this assumption in the discussion document can only be described as an intellectually dishonest attempt to guide public opinion. Disgraceful. Not the sort of performance I expect from a neutral public service.
12. Studies such as the Stern Report confirm that it is, in fact, cheaper (environmentally, socially, economically) to address climate change now; not to address it later.
13. The discussion document argues that there are limited measures available to reduce greenhouse gas emission because of the high level of renewable energy generation, the transport demands given New Zealand's geography, and the high level of agricultural emissions.
14. This is just small minded thinking¹. There is no practical reason why we cannot have an entirely renewable electricity supply, or why rail could be fully electrified, or why significantly greater public transport could be provided, and so on. Not only is it practicable but there would be both considerable social, environmental and economic benefits.
15. New Zealand needs to transition to the zero carbon economy, the sooner this starts the better.
16. The timeframe for this can be derived by using the carbon budget method set out in figure 1 of the Discussion Document.
17. How should the proposed course of action in the discussion document be changed?
18. **First**, the objectives should be replaced by objectives the same or similar to these:
 - New Zealand's post-2020 climate change reductions will set an example to the world of responsible and effective action.
 - New Zealand will use the opportunity to develop into a low carbon economy.
 - Measures to address climate change will be undertaken in a revenue-neutral manner, with attention given to assisting income earners in the lowest decile in the transition to a low carbon economy.
19. **Second**, a target of zero carbon emissions by 2035 must be adopted if we are to have a realistic chance of keeping the global temperature rise to no more than 2 degrees.

1 I also comment that the framing of agricultural cuts as a choice between carbon emissions and food supply. This is just nonsense. If food distribution issues are addressed, food supply increases are not needed.