

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



Copy of your submission

Contact information

Name Graham Smith

Organisation (if applicable)

Address [REDACTED]

Telephone [REDACTED]

Email [REDACTED]

Objectives for the contribution

Do you agree with these objectives for our contribution? Yes

1b. What is most important to you?

Minimisation of negative ecological impacts of greenhouse gas emissions through reduction in emissions.

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?

To the first question: "a fair contribution" for every country is the greatest reduction in greenhouse gas emission that they can achieve, while sustaining a reasonable standard of living. It is a moral imperative, that all citizens of Earth live in a manner that does not leave the planet in a state that jeopardises the ability of future generations to also have a good standard of living, climate change creates such jeopardy.

Switzerland has committed to 50% emissions reduction by 2030. That is a fair and achievable target for New Zealand too.

Considering the sources of our emissions and the nature of our economy, I have several comments.

Firstly, we must stop increasing our emissions. There must be immediate caps on emissions from all sectors of our economy. That requires a decoupling of energy from growth.

Secondly, because the agricultural sector is both a large part of our economy and contributes a large proportion of out total emissions, and because food scarcity is forecast to be an issue of increasing global significance, development of low-emissions agriculture should be an important focus.

Thirdly, our geographical isolation from major trading partners, and the associated high emissions incurred in transportation over large distances, should be addressed.

Finally, and also related to our geography, we are a vegemite nation - spread thinly. As such we have relatively high personal carbon footprints due to transportation costs within the country.

I suggest that each sector of New Zealand's economy have reducing emissions caps, with tradability of carbon emissions both within and between sectors.

For agriculture that would mean a reducing cap on livestock emissions, probably by limitations on livestock units, as has been done in the Lake Taupo catchment area. This would motivate the breeding of animals with high production per unit of GHG emissions. This cap should begin immediately and reduce linearly to 50% below the

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1990 stock numbers by 2030.

There are significant emissions from fertilizer use and they also should be capped. There are many technological advances being made to increase the plant uptake of nutrients so that lower fertilizer application rates are necessary. Advances in these technologies will be incentivised by caps, and could be further promoted by government's investment, to the benefit of all.

The emissions associated with international trade should be quantified and capped. All emissions produced in the production and importation of imported goods should be accounted for. If it is not counted it will not be accounted for.

Emissions from domestic transportation, both commercial and private, should be capped immediately. Vehicle emissions standards must begin increasing. The relatively high cost of electric vehicles can be offset by the trading of emissions from fossil fuel powered vehicles. Public transport can be subsidised in a similar manner, if users of public transportation are contributing fewer emissions, then that should be rewarded. Institute an increasing tax of fossil fuels that is redistributed to incentivise low emissions technologies.

The electrification of the vehicle fleet, supported by increased renewable energy production, should be promoted. A mandatory and fair feed-in tariff for any contribution of renewable electricity production should be instituted.

How will our contribution affect New Zealanders?

3. What level of cost is appropriate for New Zealand to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions? For example, what would be a reasonable reduction in annual household consumption?

Our contribution will affect New Zealanders by allowing us to be proud of our status as good global citizens. We will be regarded well by both our current neighbours and by our descendants. There may be a brief decrease in consumption as we transition from fossil energy sources to renewables, but we have unnecessarily delayed taking serious action for far too long.

It is reasonable to do what is necessary. Set the necessary targets and we will use our ingenuity and innovate our way forward. If that means accepting a reduction in household energy consumption, so be it. We are over-consumers, deluded in our belief that more is better. We can only benefit from a reality check to disabuse us of the lies of our consumer culture.

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?

Afforestation.

Increase in renewables.

Methods for accounting of carbon intensity.

Decrease in carbon intensity of agriculture.

Increase in access and affordability of public transport.

Raising of consciousness of climate change and carbon intensity in all economic activity.

Decrease in carbon intensity of imports.

Summary

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

Be ambitious. Be careful in discounting the future cost of climate change; we are doing the damage, knowingly, and we should pay the price. Apply the precautionary principle.

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Other comments

6. Is there any further information you wish the Government to consider? Please explain.
This is the international year of the soil. There is much to be learned about the role of soils in climate change, both as sources and sinks of carbon. As an agricultural nation we are well situated to lead the world in research and development of soils related technologies. Biochar is one such technology.