

Submission to Climate Change Contribution Consultation **Ministry for the Environment**

Climate Change is no longer about the science of it all – that has been settled and agreed upon.

It is now about the level of commitment various governments are prepared to place on Climate Change (CC) and the level of uncertainty they are prepared to put their people through in the future.

A recent article indicated that in NZ there has been a 42% rise in net Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions between 1990 and 2013.

Gross GHG emissions for this same period rose 21% - the fifth highest per capita amongst 40 developed countries.

The incumbent government has pledged a 5% reduction in NZ's GHG emissions between 1990 and 2020, a trivial figure, and it is very unlikely that they will even meet that, judging by the above figures.

In contrast the EU have pledged to cut their GHG emissions by "at least" 40% on their 1990 levels by 2030, and Switzerland by 50%.

This "at least" 40% pledged by the EU is the minimum contribution required to keep the planet under 2 degrees C of global warming.

I therefore request that the NZ government similarly pledge "at least" a 40% reduction in these GHG emissions over this 1990 to 2030 period, to also help keep the planet under 2 degrees C of global warming.

http://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=11430894

http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/2030/index_en.htm

Climate Change is the most serious threat facing the world today. It is not just a threat to our environment, but also to our national and global security, to poverty eradication and economic prosperity.

It is a greater threat than each of the World Wars. The last great World War (WW2) was so important to the UK that a bipartisan (coalition) government was formed to ensure the very best form of governance for the country over this period.

In February this year (2015) the major UK political parties (Conservative, Liberal Democrats and Labour) signed a bipartisan agreement similar to that of WW2 to ensure a successful outcome in controlling Climate Change.

The agreement that the three leaders signed, pledged that they would –

- Seek a fair, strong, legally binding global climate deal which limits temperature rises to below 2 degrees C
- Work together across party lines to agree on Carbon budgets in accordance with the Climate Change Act.
- Accelerate the transition to a competitive energy efficient low Carbon economy.....

I request that the government develop a bipartisan agreement on Climate Change with the major political parties of NZ, similar to the UK one above.

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/feb/14/cameron-clegg-and-miliband-sign-joint-climate-pledge>

Although the Minister of Climate Change Issues has said that Climate Change is a global issue, requiring global agreement to address the problem, it has been shown that this global agreement is very difficult to achieve.

There is no need for NZ to wait for a global Climate Change agreement before seriously addressing Climate Change issues in NZ.

A major breakthrough occurred in March this year (2015) addressing this catastrophic political impasse and ongoing vacillation over Climate Change.

This breakthrough, the “Oslo Principles on Global Climate Change Obligations”, developed over several years by leading international legal minds, shows that there are already in existence current legal obligations under international law, including human rights law and environmental law that governments of the world should be complying with.

Thus, despite the lack of international treaties on Climate Change, there is sufficient law in existence obliging governments to reduce the pollution of the atmosphere and thus the heating of the planet to the detriment of all living beings, including the human race.

Therefore I request that the NZ government, despite lack of international treaties, immediately act on the principles laid down in the “Oslo Principles on Global Climate Change Obligations”.

<http://www.yale.edu/macmillan/globaljustice/oslo%20principles.pdf>

The NZ Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) that the government is using as NZ's primary tool for addressing emissions is deeply flawed.

Evidence of the failure of this ETS is its failure to stabilise either our net or gross emissions, with our net emissions, instead of stabilizing, showing a 42% rise over the period 1990 and 2013.

Similarly, gross emissions were not stabilised to the gross 1990 levels, with a 21% increase over this same period.

These Greenhouse Gas emissions are amongst the fastest rising in the world – not a good look for our ETS.

The deep flaws in NZ's ETS include –

- Very low Carbon prices, with a vast overcapacity on the global Carbon market.
- The piecemeal approach in implementing the ETS.
- Companies are purchasing low cost carbon offsets instead of reducing emissions.
- The commonplace use of foreign carbon credits for emission reducing activities.
- High cost of compliance administration.
- Lack of verifiable standards.
- Polluters get greater rewards than clean green technology.

British Columbia (population 4.66 million versus 4.59 million in NZ) introduced an economy wide Carbon pricing policy in 2008, which has proved in the subsequent almost 7 years to have been a very effective design and have an enviable track record.

Because of this Carbon Tax, the provincial economy enjoys a stronger performance than the Canadian average.

Carbon pollution is down and so is per capita fuel consumption.

This Carbon Tax now funds more than a billion dollars a year in other tax cuts, not being used at all as a new revenue stream.

The empirical evidence from British Columbia has shown that a Carbon Tax and a thriving economy can coexist.

I request that the NZ government move from their deeply flawed ETS and in its place adopt a carbon tax similar to that introduced in British Columbia in 2008.

<http://cleanenergycanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Clean-Energy-Canada-How-to-Adopt-a-Winning-Carbon-Price-2015.pdf>

Yours sincerely,

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