

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



Copy of your submission

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Objectives for the contribution

Do you agree with these objectives for our contribution? Yes

1b. What is most important to you?

We must contribute on the basis of our contributions to greenhouse gas emissions and not be constrained by lack of action by other nations such as the USA.

The definition of "fair" has different meanings for different groups. Fair in relation to climate change targets should not be seen as only doing as much as anyone else, but instead should reflect taking action that reflects our large per capita contribution to greenhouse 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?

At least 40% cuts by 2030 in our gross domestic greenhouse gas emissions compared with 1990, towards at least 95% by 2050. We cannot be complacent. Climate change threatens our national security, the long-term safety of our children and the quality of our food and water supplies. We must lead by example by setting ambitious targets. Fairness is irrelevant in the light of the potential global unrest resulting from unmitigated climate change.

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?

High and middle income New Zealanders consume a much greater proportion of the world's resources than most global citizens. High and middle income New Zealanders need to recognize that our lifestyles make an "unfair" contribution to greenhouse gas emissions relative to most people in the world, and thus reduce consumption of unnecessary consumer goods, luxury foods, and transport fuel. An increase in fuel costs which drive a change in lifestyles towards increased active and public transport should not be seen as a cost, but rather a benefit (benefits include better health, less congested roads, safer environments for children, better air quality).

The estimates of the impacts on household income of the range of emission reduction targets do not factor in the costs over time of failing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the increasing costs of food production, clean water, health costs as a result of food-borne illness and climate related injury and disease, and potential loss of livelihoods due to climate change and sea level rise.

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?

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All of the identified opportunities are likely to contribute to long-term benefits.

We also need to reduce our reliance on ruminant livestock farming and increase our production of more sustainable plant based crops. Reducing meat consumption and increasing plant foods in NZ may have additional benefits in terms of reducing the burden of disease from cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity.

Reducing our dependence of the family car as a means of transport and increasing our use of active and public transport will have benefits with regard to improved air quality, improved health and reduced burden of chronic disease.

We should encourage waste minimisation and encourage recycling and purchase of fewer but better quality goods. This will reduce of fossil fuel consumption in terms of production of packaging materials, production of goods, transport, and our emissions resulting from burning/disposing of wastes

Summary

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

NZ should invest bravely. We cannot keep digging up fossil fuels and maintain the status quo in terms of energy use. NZ should place an immediate moratorium on fossil fuel exploration, and pledge to phase out existing extraction in the next decade. There is no doubt that new clean technologies will be the way of the future. Let's be at the forefront of innovation. We have excellent science and technology and the sort of beautiful country to attract the best minds in the world to our universities and research institutions. Instead of hoping to dig up petroleum from our oceans (a high risk, low return investment), let's invest that money into R&D towards new energy production technologies and reducing agricultural emissions.

Other comments

6. Is there any further information you wish the Government to consider? Please explain.
NZ is currently investing a substantial amount of money in High Value Nutrition National Science Challenge; which aims to drive economic growth by adding value to our existing commodity food products. There is a strong emphasis on research to add value to our existing dairy, meat, seafood and horticultural exports. Increasing the focus within this National Science Challenge on establishing new high value plant foods as a replacement for ruminant livestock-derived products is recommended.