

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



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## Contact information

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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?

However these objectives are blather. NZ needs to be a leader in GHG reduction - it's the only way we can pressure larger emitters on the international stage

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?

Transport and energy emissions are way too high for such a small economy. They can easily be reduced at little cost, A 20% reduction target (from 1990 levels) by 2025 should be easy to achieve.

Additionally there is an urgent need to transition away from fossil fuels to avoid severe damage to the economy from oil shocks. The later this is left, the more pronounced those shocks will be

How will our contribution affect New Zealanders?

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

Carbon can be controlled at zero or negative cost to the economy. Scrapping the ETS, putting a significant (revenue neutral) cost on fossil carbon and investing in infrastructure to ready the country for carbon constraints will all have a positive effect.

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?

Under current government policy, nothing will occur (except emissions will continue to grow).

What needs to be done:

Dumping of the ETS and institution of a carbon tax

Investment in infrastructure

Improvement in logistics (nationwide co-ordination of freight transport). Note, a significant proportion of road freight consists of identical items being transported in opposite directions at the same time.

Dumping of the current electricity market and its replacement with a consumer-oriented system that values efficiency.

Institution of electricity feed in tariffs to enable long-term preservation of a reliable grid

Research into preservation and enhancement of soil carbon

Instituting a cost on nitrogen fertilisers

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## Summary

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

Low priority. Current technology is sufficient to easily achieve targets. Only political will is missing

## Other comments

6. Is there any further information you wish the Government to consider? Please explain.

Note that:

NZ's proportion of renewable electricity is still highly dependent on lake inflows. Those inflows are in turn highly dependent on weather patterns in the Pacific. With the current state of the Interdecadal Pacific Oscillation, we can expect higher than average inflows for a few more years. However, this will be followed by a sustained period of lower inflows - this needs to be prepared for.

Geothermal energy may be considered renewable (if the field is managed well) but it is also an emitter of CO<sub>2</sub>. Low planting rates in the last 12 years mean there will be an extended period where forestry offsets will not be available.

A large proportion of our gas reserves are effectively being exported (by Methanex) for little benefit to NZ. Note Methanex pays no company tax in NZ and it accounts for some 6% of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

Agricultural emissions are a shrinking proportion of total. This is because energy related CO<sub>2</sub> has increased far faster than agricultural CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents since 1990.

Research into methane is largely misguided – the bacteria that make methane in guts (methanogens) have been around ever since animals evolved a gut. There's no magic bullet to get rid of them or seriously reduce their numbers. Where research is really needed is sorting out best practice management for preserving and enhancing soil carbon. Currently dairy farms (at least in some parts of the country) are losing a tonne of C per Ha per year (Landcare).

N<sub>2</sub>O is a much more serious issue and much easier to address – at least technically, perhaps not politically. All that needs to happen is to put a brake on nitrogen fertilisers. This would have the added advantage of de-intensifying the dairy industry, taking the pressure off our sadly declining rivers and lakes, and be a far more effective method of reducing methane (because cow numbers would drop). There are practical ways of preserving farmer profitability under such a scenario.