

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?

- It must guide New Zealand over the long term in the global transition to a low emissions world.
- That the consequences of NOT doing anything are considered first!

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?

The nature of New Zealand's emissions is such that we should be overtly, loudly, and aggressively encouraging the move to 'low emission' activities – from individuals, households, transport, businesses and industries. New Zealand should be encouraging low emissions agricultural businesses. According to a 2006 report of the United Nations FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization) the rapid increase in the numbers of cattle is the greatest threat to climate, forests, and wildlife. New Zealand's emissions from transport should be addressed by greater emphasis on public transport. Individuals, businesses, and industry should be encouraged to seek alternative renewable energy sources, e.g. solar. New Zealand should be de-emphasizing exploration – and therefore reliance upon – for oil/gas/coal. New Zealand's emissions target should at minimum be 40% - a target which even then is less than what is truly responsible.

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?

Again the question should be what is the cost – what are the consequences – of NOT reducing greenhouse gas emissions? Are we going to measure our response against what other countries do versus what is the responsible thing to do – not measured against short term economic consequences but against not so distant potential for environmental collapses and along with them social and economic collapses? Let us do what needs to be done – recognizing that it might be a bit tough – but that is where leadership should show itself. The discussion paper suggests that a target of 40% below 1990 might result in an additional \$530 reduction in household income. Against the potential for doing too little too late \$530 is an amazing bargain. If 40% (or higher) is the target then we will find a way(s) to deal with it.

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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Most important = transition to a low-carbon economy. Government should make transition to a low-carbon economy the reference against which all of its actions are measured. Funding for activities contrary to this should be removed – including e.g. subsidies for extraction of oil/gas/coal and emphasis on increasing herds of cattle.

Summary

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

Development of future technologies for reducing emissions should NOT be taken into consideration when setting the target. Yes, encouragement should be given for the development of supportive technologies. But reliance upon untested or possible future technologies as a component of a target calculation only delays implementation of known and responsible actions. Costs are secondary to setting targets. First one sets targets from the perspective of what is necessary and responsible. Once those targets are set, then we set about aggressively promoting the achievement of those targets. We will find ways. New Zealanders are responsible and creative peoples. We will respond in a multitude of positive, creative actions. Having strong leadership from government is essential.

Other comments

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

Carbon markets and carbon sinks can be great things. But relying upon carbon markets and carbon sinks to resolve the issue of excessive carbon dioxide (and other emissions) is lazy thinking and only pushes the responsibility for reducing emissions on to others. Reduction of emissions is our responsibility – perhaps more so than many other places, because we have the means and an educated and fairly well to do populous – now – to reduce our emissions. Reluctance to do so – pushing that responsibility elsewhere - is a poor way to address the issue.

In the first instance government needs to demonstrate that it understands the issue – that it clearly, unambiguously, unreservedly understands the occurring and imminent nature of climate change and its causes. Government should now – highlight and aggressively educate and promote the move to low emission behaviour. New Zealand Government has the opportunity to take a leadership role on this planet in the reduction of emissions. Government has the opportunity and responsibility to show the rest of the world that New Zealand understands the urgency of the issue. New Zealand government must demonstrate to our country, to our neighbours, to the peoples of this planet that we take this responsibility seriously and that we are taking strong, positive, and sometimes even somewhat painful measures to address the issue. Government needs to show leadership. There is a world of people ready to follow.