

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



Copy of your submission

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?

The concept of intergenerational fairness is established as the guiding principle for setting GHG targets. This approach can be used to overcome technical misunderstanding of the many numbers and scientific facts that need assimilation to make this decision. The key issue is will the current generation consider it fair to pass on a legacy of rising GHGs so that we can enjoy an improving standard of living without paying the real environmental cost. This addresses more than just climate change and applies to water quality, mineral resources, population growth, etc.

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?

It means little to others who live on the planet, we have chosen an intensive agricultural system to produce wealth that has large environmental impacts. This can be mitigated by forest plantations for the next 30 years and give NZ time to find technical solutions to animal based emissions or change change land use.

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?

We will need to adjust our sense of entitlement to exploit resources and the environment. If we believe in fairness and wish our grand children to have a better life than ours, we need to fix the GHG problem we have largely created.

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?

Fourth example - Reducing GHG emissions and increasing forest sinks. Forests have numerous other functions such as erosion control and clean water that will be important while we withstand some inevitable climate extremes in the medium term. They also offer biomaterials that will be needed to replace petrochemical based materials such as plastics and polymers. A zero carbon footprint is possible for the next 30 years if we convert approximately 1 million hectares of eroding marginal hill country in the North Island to fast growing plantation forests.

Summary

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Ministry for the
Environment
Manatū Mo Te Taiao

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

We can not afford to underestimate the consequences of climate change. So we need to wear the cost of mitigation of the worse scenario. If we are wrong then it may be expensive but not disasterous.

Other comments

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

The principle of fairness has created major social change in the world. e.g democracy, abolished slavery, gave women the vote, freedom of speech, justice- the right to a trial. It is also embedded in the idea of "Gifts and Gains" - the greatest gain is made by those who gift.