



COMMISSION FOR ECOLOGY, JUSTICE AND PEACE

16 July 2019

SUBMISSION TO THE ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE CLIMATE CHANGE RESPONSE (ZERO CARBON) AMENDMENT BILL

Continuity is essential, because policies related to climate change and environmental protection cannot be altered with every change of government. Results take time and demand immediate outlays which may not produce tangible results within any one government's term...To take up these responsibilities and the costs they entail, politicians will inevitably clash with the mindset of short-term gain and results which dominates present-day economics and politics. But if they are courageous, they will attest to their God-given dignity and leave behind a testimony of selfless responsibility.

Pope Francis: Laudato Si' #181

SUPPORT FOR THE GOALS OF THE BILL

1. The Ecology Justice and Peace Commission of the Catholic Archdiocese of Wellington supports the Climate Change Response (Carbon Zero) Amendment Bill because the New Zealand government and all New Zealanders have the moral responsibility to act. This means making the necessary transition to a zero-net carbon emissions economy in order to lessen the impact of climate change.
2. **We support the Bill and wish to see it proceed.** We would like the opportunity to speak to the Select Committee in support of our submission.

THE REQUIREMENT FOR LONG-TERM GOALS AND TARGETS

3. The Bill must set goals and targets beyond the length of a Parliamentary term. In ordinary circumstances, there is a constitutional convention that a current government cannot bind its successors. However, the climate emergency facing the world cannot be changed by short-term goals and short-term thinking. The legislation needs to be enduring. New Zealand society has an intergenerational responsibility, for which the short-term thinking of a Parliamentary term is unhelpful. Parliament needs to look beyond today's voting population. Many New Zealanders who will have to live with the consequences of climate change are currently too young to vote.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

4. We support the guiding principles agreed by Cabinet, as outlined in the Explanatory note to the Bill, and would like to see these formally reflected in the purposes of the Commission in Clause 5B:
 - a. Leadership at home and abroad;
 - b. A productive, sustainable and climate-resilient economy;
 - c. A just and inclusive society.

5. We support the fuller explanation of these principles found in the Regulatory Impact Statement, particularly the following points:
 - *Leadership at home and internationally:*
 - putting in place a stable and enduring climate change legal and policy framework;
 - holding ourselves and others to account for acting consistently with the Paris Agreement;
 - supporting the Pacific and building the region's capacity for mitigation and adaptation.
 - *A productive, sustainable and climate-resilient economy:*
 - recognising the different policy pathways and distributional impacts of meeting the target and putting in place support policies to mitigate any downside risks.
 - *A just and inclusive society:*
 - assessing the merits of early action and carefully managing the speed and pathways of the transition;
 - supporting regions and communities affected by transition policies and those needing to adapt to ongoing climate change impacts;
 - recognising the rights and needs of future generations, as well as those of iwi/Māori under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

IMPORTANCE OF ACHIEVING TARGETS

6. Temperature increases must be kept below 1.5°C. This may require more ambitious action sooner than this Bill will deliver. We recognise the need to undertake a transition, but we urge the Government to resist any temptation to further water down the targets.

 7. There will be considerable costs in implementing the changes required to meet the targets. But the impacts of climate change will also impose considerable costs on our society. The cost of not taking action exceeds the cost of taking action.
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RECOGNITION OF TE TIRITI O WAITANGI AND IMPACT ON MĀORI

8. We support the requirement to ensure that the membership of the Commission includes skills, experience and expertise in te Tiriti o Waitangi and te ao Māori, including tikanga Māori, te reo Māori, mātauranga Māori and Māori economic activity. The climate crisis will be solved by using scientific knowledge, economic instruments and government regulation, together with harnessing the motivation of spirituality and cultural knowledge. The Commission must be well placed to fully understand the implications of proposals on Māori.

A JUST TRANSITION

9. We would like to see the Bill strengthened in relation to support given to people, groups and regions disproportionately affected by the transition to a zero-net carbon emissions economy. Matters for consideration by the Climate Change Commission under Clause 5L will include differences between sectors and regions, and the distribution of benefits, costs and risks between generations. Each specific policy proposal under the framework outlined in the Bill will require attention to be paid to ensuring that the transition, for example, from former industries and employment, will be planned and managed. We recognise the potential for growth and new forms of employment as new ways of working emerge.
10. It is important that the outcomes of changes that may negatively impact some groups while benefitting the wider community will be not left to the market. Our whole society needs to provide loving support, in the form of attentiveness, care and additional support for people and communities whose lives will be disrupted by necessary changes. The Climate Change Commission must safeguard the wellbeing of New Zealand's most vulnerable citizens.
11. As well as considering the impact of changes as we transition to a zero-net carbon emissions economy, the Climate Change Commission also needs to have the ability to monitor and recommend assistance as the impacts of climate change are experienced. Unless this can happen, two similarly placed communities may have different levels of attention and support. For example, in practice there may be similar outcomes for one community where employment is lost because of a decision to cease forestry operations, and a second community where employment is lost because of loss of trees and land resulting from sea level rise or erosion. Both groups will need to be supported through the necessary transition. Unless both situations can be considered, there may be inequitable outcomes.

LEADERSHIP AND IMPACT BEYOND OUR BORDERS

12. Despite the guiding principle of "Leadership at home and abroad", and the specific goal in the RIS under that principle of "supporting the Pacific and building the region's
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capacity for mitigation and adaptation”, it is unclear in the Bill how the Commission will be able to consider matters beyond New Zealand’s borders.

13. The Commission must be obliged to consider the impact of proposals beyond our national jurisdiction under Clause 5L. For example, if New Zealand reduces carbon production at home, but imports goods from abroad which are linked to deforestation or the increased production of carbon, we will be failing in our long term hopes and goals for the legislation.
14. We would like to see formal recognition in the Bill of the likely impact of demographic changes due to environmental displacement. The first responsibility is for the adaptation needs and costs of Pacific peoples who live within Tokelau, Niue and the Cook Islands, given their special constitutional arrangements with New Zealand. The Climate Change Commission also needs to be able to consider New Zealand’s international aid budgets to help with strategies for adaptation and mitigation in the wider Pacific region.

EDUCATION

15. We wish to see the Climate Change Commission charged with a responsibility for environmental education across multiple sectors – not just the school curriculum but also workplaces, retail, sports/recreation centres, community centres. This is necessary because people need to understand the issues. If carbon reduction is simply a matter for a policymaking elite, there is a risk that the necessary changes will not have popular support.

REPORTING

16. We recognise the explanation given in the Explanatory note to the Bill that requiring reporting from all organisations, companies and firms to report on adaptation efforts and risks is too cumbersome at this time. We support the reporting requirements in 5ZV from the public sector, including local government, state-owned enterprises, police and defence forces.
17. Voluntary reporting from the private and community sector is realistic at this stage, given the work needed to set up accounting processes and reporting requirements. However, we recognise that in the long term this will have to change, because otherwise it will leave a significant gap in economic information to the Commission. It will be difficult to fully understand the impacts of policy instruments and goals without being able to measure the impact in the private and community sector.

For more information, please contact Lisa Beech, Ecology, Justice and Peace advisor, Catholic Archdiocese of Wellington, l.beech@wn.catholic.org.nz
