

Ministry for the Environment

Our Climate Your Say:

Consultation on the Zero

Carbon Bill

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Submitter details

1. Nelson Marlborough Health (Nelson Marlborough District Health Board) (NMH) is a key organisation involved in the health and wellbeing of the people within Te Tau Ihu o Te Waka a Maui. NMH appreciates the opportunity to comment from a public health perspective on *Our Climate Your Say: Consultation on the Zero Carbon Bill*.
2. NMH makes this submission in recognition of its responsibilities to improve, promote and protect the health of people and communities under the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000 and the Health Act 1956.

General Comments

3. NMH strongly supports the general intention of the consultation document to reduce the impact of climate change on New Zealand. Climate change has the potential to adversely affect the health of New Zealand's people, environment and economy. By planning across all sectors now, the government and government agencies have the opportunity to be proactive and make effective changes that can reduce emissions so we can meet our international obligations. If New Zealand waits, then there is potential that sudden changes need to be made. This increases the likelihood of unintended consequences occurring which can have an impact on people's health and wellbeing.
4. Health equity and climate change are inseparable. As stated in the consultation document, those most affected by climate change will be those living in low-lying coastal regions (including those living in our neighbouring Pacific countries), and those who have a lower socio-economic status. It is pleasing to see that the consultation document makes specific reference to the need for any intervention to be fair and equitable to ensure that the most vulnerable are not disproportionately affected.
5. NMH also supports the inclusion of the concept of kaitiakitanga and the integration of the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi into the drafting of the Bill. It is important that Maori aspirations and values are included in the Bill to ensure that the indigenous relationship to the environment is acknowledged and also so that collectively different community groups can work together on climate change solutions.

Specific Comments

6. *Question 1:* NMH supports the Government in setting a 2050 target in legislation as this provides certainty for every sector and enables government agencies, organisations and businesses to plan accordingly.
7. *Question 2:* NMH supports Option 3: Net zero emissions across *all* greenhouse gases by 2050. It is important that both carbon dioxide levels and methane levels are substantially reduced in order to ensure that we are able to keep within the global warming limit of 1.5°C. Option 3 will result in broader environmental health improvements due to the reduction of nitrates and improved drinking water quality as a result of improved farming practices needed to reduce methane emissions.
8. *Question 3:* New Zealand should seek to meet its targets from domestic net emissions reductions only. This approach means that New Zealand can address the cause of emissions in the near future in a planned manner, rather than delay addressing the causes which could result in the need to adapt rapidly over a short amount of time which can expose people to more unintended consequences which could be detrimental to people's wellbeing. The health sector itself is now looking at ways to reduce its environmental footprint including the reduction of emissions.
9. *Question 4:* The Zero Carbon Bill should allow that 2050 target of be revised if international and national evidence, such as the *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Special report on Global Warming of 1.5°C*, show that the proposed targets are not strong enough. However, the targets should not be weakened.
10. *Question 5:* NMH supports the three proposed emissions budgets of five years each as this provides certainty.
11. *Question 9:* NMH supports the Zero Carbon Bill to require the Government to set out plans within a certain timeframe to achieve the emissions budgets.
12. *Question 10:* The most important health issues for the Government to consider in setting plans are issues concerning equity, and overall environmental health. As mentioned earlier in our submission, those who are the most disadvantaged, for instance, those on low incomes, children, elderly, minority groups and refugees are at risk of being most affected by climate change. Therefore it is important that the direct and indirect health

effects are minimised as much as possible to ensure these groups do not face further hardships.

Consideration also needs to be given to the types of low emission practices that may be adopted to ensure that the natural environment is improved overall.

13. *Question 11:* NMH supports the introduction of a Climate Change Commission that advises and monitors New Zealand's progress as this highlights the importance of climate change matters.
14. *Question 13:* NMH agrees that the Climate Change Commissioners must have a range of essential and desirable expertise. In addition to those experts already stated, NMH recommends that a public health expert is included on the committee to give oversight regarding public health risks, the level of health benefits of any recommendation, and to assess the impacts for vulnerable populations.
15. *Question 14:* NMH agrees that the Zero Carbon Bill should cover adapting to climate change. The climate is changing and reducing the level of emissions will alter the rate of change however it is still important that plans are in place to ensure the country can adapt to changes. NMH supports provisions for:
 - a. A national climate change risk assessment
 - b. A national climate change adaptation plan
 - c. A regular review of progress towards implementing the national adaption plan.
 - d. An adaption reporting plan.

Conclusion

16. NMH thanks the Ministry for the Environment for the opportunity to comment on *Our Climate Your Say: Consultation on the Zero Carbon Bill*.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Bramley', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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