



To: Environment Select Committee

From: Marty Sebire
Resilient Carterton

Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Bill

This submission is on behalf of **Resilient Carterton**, a non-profit organisation building resilience, connectedness, and equity in our small community in Wairarapa.

We wish to speak to our submission. Executive Committee members Marty Sebire and Mike Osborne will appear in support of the submission.

We commend the Government for its consultation to date on its climate change proposals and for the introduction of the Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Bill.

Scientific research, international organisations, academic study, and many others provide all the evidence needed to support action of unprecedented scale and urgency. This and concern for our future has provided the stimulus for introducing the measures set out in the Bill.

We totally agree with the need to urgently reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) to avoid climate and ecological crises, and the need for everyone to play their part in achieving this.

We encourage you to strengthen the provisions of the Bill, to be more ambitious, and to limit the ability of future governments to water it down.

We wish to make the following comments on the Bill:

1. **Demand-driven emissions must be drastically reduced.** New Zealand’s per capita emissions are unacceptably high. The focus should be on:
 - 1.1. **Reducing air travel.** International air travel has to be included in the measurement of emissions, and strongly discouraged. This is of course linked to international tourism, an important part of our economy, but it is the second biggest contributor to household emissions (after population factors).
 - 1.2. **Dietary change.** The production of red meat and dairy are high-emitting industries. Unfortunately for New Zealand, these are also significant sectors of our economy. But they are not sustainable¹, especially with respect to GHGs. Comments that New Zealand is a GHG-efficient producer of these products are not relevant and should be ignored. The world needs to eat less of them, not just produce them efficiently.
 - 1.3. **General consumption.** Our current lifestyles, particularly by wealthy New Zealanders, are not sustainable. We need to consume less “stuff” and adopt simpler living.
 - 1.4. **Economic model.** The prevailing economic model is based on growth. With climate change and the use of limited natural resources, continued growth is simply not possible. We must replace this fantasy of growth with an economy that is locally focussed, low carbon, and the sustainable use of resources. This must include the use of better price signals for carbon (the ETS is ineffective) and for other externalities.

¹ For clarification, reference to ‘sustainable’ in this submission does not mean simply friendly to the environment, or economically sustainable, or energy efficient. It means meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs, ie can be maintained for many generations.

In addition, subsidies (direct and indirect) should be removed that prop up these externalities. Taxpayers should not be subsidising polluters and GHG-emitters.

Driving down demand and the related emissions require huge societal changes that in turn require significant and bold leadership.

2. **More education.** There appears to be little emphasis in the Bill on the role of education about the reasons for reducing GHGs, the objectives of zero carbon, methods of reduction, or our responsibilities as citizens.
3. **Greater transparency.** We are concerned that there is a lack of accountability to the public. Deliberations by the Climate Change Commission should be completely open, and all information shared.
4. **The target should be sooner.** The IPCC's latest trajectory (2018) is that global heating is likely to reach 1.5C above pre-industrial times by 2030 (mid-range). That's only 11 years away! Scientists warn that this is the threshold for potentially catastrophic climate and ecological change. With time lags and possible reinforcing feedback loops, it will only get worse.

The IPCC is by its nature conservative. Every report laments that the previous report underestimated emissions, and underestimated the effects of emissions. If the targets in the Bill are based on the latest IPCC, then we should be even more aggressive.

We think that 2050 target for net zero is too late. The further away it is, the less visible it is, the more likely action will be deferred. Bring the net zero target back to 2035. Add interim reduction targets that are challenging and measurable. And add negative emission targets after 2035. Go hard, and check you are getting there.

The Bill allows too many opportunities and too many reasons for the targets to be amended. We think that all targets should be ratcheted such that they can only be amended to be more challenging, and never easier. This includes where subsequent IPCC reports are worse than expected.

5. **Couple biogenic emissions with biological offsets.** We agree that biogenic emissions should be treated differently from carbon dioxide emissions. But instead of settling on a reduction target that can be argued (and Federated Farmers continue to) simply set a target of net zero emissions, after offsetting with biological means, eg trees, **on the same property.**

Further, the target should be net zero by 2030, with an interim 50% reduction by 2025. Measurement should be guided by science. Do it farm by farm. Allow smaller lots of plantings and wider scope for offsets (eg riparian planting, smaller natives, soil).

6. **The ETS is not working.** Urgently address a functioning ETS, or replace it with a carbon levy. The price for carbon needs to accelerate quickly to \$150 per unit by 2022. And do not allow international carbon credits. We need to be responsible for our own emissions. We think a carbon levy/fund is more transparent, provides a more direct price signal for consumption decisions, and can be used to assist industry and sectors with their transition to low carbon.
7. **Equity.** Need to ensure fairness and equity. We will *all* need to sacrifice, incur costs during the transition to a low carbon future. We will *all* need to change our behaviour. No-one is exempt. The alternative is catastrophic!

Younger generations and poorer sections of the community will be more severely impacted. Our Pacific cousins displaced by climate change should be welcomed to our home.

There are political leaders, industry leaders, and community leaders who suggest we should only match the actions of our trading partners, or that one group is special and should be exempt from behavioural change. That is not leadership; it's making excuses to not change. It's not good enough.

8. **The Commission should report to Parliament.** The Climate Change Commission should report directly to Parliament, not be an advisor to a Government Minister or a Department. It should be similar to the Auditor-General, the Ombudsman, and the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment. We are facing a climate and ecological disaster. The Commission must be independent of the government of the day, and not be directed by a Minister. It should also report directly to the public and be subject to the Official Information Act.
9. **Permanent native forests.** Afforestation is one of the best actions we can take. But it needs to be on a massive scale and as soon as possible. The Billion Trees programme is a start, but permanent native forests is best. Allocate as much Crown land as possible. Encourage lots more. Start yesterday. It is one of the few proven tools we have to provide time for us to transition to a low carbon society.
10. **Technology is not the answer.** Don't rely on technology, especially technology that doesn't exist yet or been proved at scale. We've been waiting for these magical technologies to appear. The window of opportunity to act and meet the 1.5C is closing. We can't afford to wait any longer.

We must follow the precautionary approach. Technological solutions that rely on continued technological or organisational input, such as geoengineering, Bioenergy with Carbon Capture and Storage (BECCS), or (heaven forbid) nuclear, would be irresponsible to future generations. If we adopt any responsible technological advances, they will be a bonus and we can meet our targets sooner.

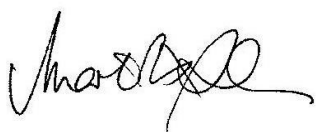
It will be best to use nature's solutions. As above, permanent native forests are a good solution from nature. Soil is best for carbon sequestration. This will require different husbandry of our soil, using techniques such as regenerative practices to quickly build and improve soil.

Our community is really concerned about climate change, and we expect significant impacts in our lifetimes.

We expect and accept the need to make huge sacrifices to avoid these impacts. We implore you to put in place the necessary policy and infrastructure, and do it with urgency, scale, and ambition. Ensure that it is fair to all sectors of the community, and ensure that it can't be rolled back by future governments.

We don't want you to be measured, prudent, or cautious. We want you to be bold and courageous, yet evidence-based. Don't water down the provisions in this Bill. Instead, strengthen them. Show us leadership. And we will support you.

Kia kaha.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marty Sebire', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Marty Sebire
for Resilient Carterton

16 July 2019