



CANA'S VIEW ON - AND GUIDE TO - ZERO CARBON ACT SUBMISSIONS

Any of you who haven't yet submitted on the Zero Carbon Act- Do it! When people always say they feel helpless and wonder what they can do - This is it. Telling politicians what's important to us can do more for the planet than any one person's individual actions.

Finding your way through a submission can be a bit of a minefield. Instigators of the bill Generation Zero have made a [comprehensive guide to making a submission](#), which is well worth a look (and both their website and WWF have 'detailed submission' forms with prewritten answer options, which you might find useful - see the end of this document for links).

But we thought we'd give you our two cents on this too! We suggest taking a stronger line than Gen Zero, aiming for carbon zero by 2040 (as also advocated by WWF, Greenpeace, Ora Taiao, and Forest and Bird). Staying below 1.5 degrees won't happen without early and dramatic action! We need to start cutting emissions NOW - and FAST. That is the message from the scientific community.

But first and foremost - get involved in the conversation; whatever you want to say, put it in a submission.

Submissions close at 5.00 pm on on 19 July 2018.

Some points to consider:

→ Although there are templates you can put your name to, it is more powerful to write a submission in your own words. Please write a submission in your own words if you feel confident to and have time. However if you only have time to make a form submission, you can use Gen Zero's template [here](#).

→ Start off with the main, most important point: That you **strongly support** the **immediate** creation of a Zero Carbon Act

→ Under **Question 2**, the three proposed "net zero" options are:

1. Net zero carbon dioxide: Reducing net carbon dioxide emissions to zero by 2050
2. Net zero long-lived gases and stabilised short-lived gases: Long-lived gases to net zero by 2050, while also stabilising short-lived gases

3. Net zero emissions: Net zero emissions across all greenhouse gases by 2050.

(In the notes section you can say you want a shorter time frame e.g. 2040).

This is relating to the controversial methane debate, and whether as a short-lived gas it should be treated differently. We recommend the “two basket” approach:

- *Combining long-lived gas reductions with carbon sinks (through forestry and carbon sequestration in soil) to achieve negative long-lived emissions by 2050; and*
- *Reducing short-lived gases to sustainable levels.”*

For more info, Jeanette Fitzsimmons wrote [wrote a great article here](#). Methane from agriculture definitely needs to be cut back to sustainable levels, but no one is clear on what those levels are. Calling for the Climate Commission to identify such levels is therefore very important. Another interesting aspect is an offsetting requirement for short-lived gases in pine forestry (short-term sinks) and long-lived gases in long term forests (permanent sinks). This is a tricky topic with a lot of uncertainty and contention about the details, so it's up to you how much you want to include on this.

→ You may like to include a view (under **question 3**) on international carbon credits.

Allowing international carbon credits to be counted as domestic emission reduction (as has been going on thus far) has been completely ineffective. We should have either a ‘firewall’, in which NZ’s emissions must reach zero domestically, but additional, separately counted international credits are still available; or no international credits- we have every capability of reaching these goals without them.

Also, we don’t know how much NZ is planning to be ‘net zero’ via the use of carbon sinks - planting trees is awesome but at the end of the day we also need to decarbonise our electricity, energy and transport systems. You might want to include something about the need to set a **gross** emissions reduction target (rather than a **net** one, which includes trees as carbon sink offsets). We need the Government to create an environment where it is not a financially viable option for, for example, Fonterra - or Greymouth Hospital - to build new coal-fired boilers because they are the cheapest option.

New Zealand has gained an international reputation for “creative accounting” in this area ([see page 12 of this document](#) for a detailed description), and is [proposing new international rules](#) that may let us off accounting for the thousands of hectares of plantation forests we are currently harvesting. So emphasising the gross reduction target is very important. We have spent far too long relying on international credits and creative accounting with carbon sinks to meet our international commitments, and it’s time to start cutting actual emissions at home.

For more reading, you might care to look at the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment’s [submission to the Productivity Commission](#), who points out:

“Each tonne of emissions offset by forestry is a tonne not reduced at source. Relying too heavily on forestry could lead to continued high levels of gross emissions. Pressure to reduce these after 2050 could entail a more costly and disruptive transition than a deeper transition commenced earlier.”

→ You might also like to include a point that we should be monitoring (and having limits on) cumulative emissions. This is what matters to the atmosphere at the end of the day, and is important for us so we can ensure we get started early on emissions reduction.

→ Interim targets: We've called above for carbon zero by 2040. However, we have international commitments under the Paris Agreement that are definitely sub-optimal. We should have strong five or ten year targets. You may want to emphasise the importance of New Zealand strengthening our 2030 Paris Agreement target- setting our emissions reductions in the right direction, as well as giving an international signal to the world that we are serious about our emissions pathways.

→ In terms of the Climate Commission (**questions 11 & 12**), we recommend it should exist to **give advice** and **monitor progress**. It shouldn't have decision making powers due to the undemocratic nature of the commission, and to avoid conflicts of interest if it ends up basically monitoring itself. However, to ensure transparency and accountability, the Government must table all its reports in Parliament.

→ As for adaptation (**Questions 14-16**)- We are already experiencing the impacts of 1°C of warming - and we have seen marine heatwaves, causing our hottest summer ever this year, along with extreme flooding events and cyclones hitting many parts of the country. Until now, the Government has relied on regional councils to come up with their own planning for this, but many of them are calling for national guidance. So you may want to mention the importance of Government guidance in this area, and a national plan. So you could emphasise your agreement with these two points:

Identifying the risks: The Government must prepare a National Climate Risk Assessment.

Safely adapting to climate change: The Government must produce an Adaptation Programme to address the climate risks identified in the National Climate Risk Assessment.

Other resources:

Generation Zero's quick / detailed [submission forms](#):
-And their [submission guidelines](#)

Kiwi conservation club's [info](#) - awesome resource for kids (Forest and Bird)

Info from WWF & their submission form [template](#)

Forest and Bird's [submission form](#)

Ministry for the Environment [submission form](#) (and also here you can find MfE's full kahuna guidelines).