

**SENIORS CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK (SCAN) SUBMISSION
MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT (MFE)
CONSULTATION ON THE SECOND EMISSIONS REDUCTION PLAN
ON 21 AUGUST 2024**

1. What do you think is working well in New Zealand to reduce our emissions and achieve the 2050 net zero target?

Seniors Climate Action Network (SCAN) with over 500 members cannot point to anything that is working well to reduce our emissions fast enough to keep the heating of our planet at 1.5 degrees Centigrade above industrial level. Only by accepting and acting on this non-negotiable physical reality do we and future generations stand a chance of survival.

The urgency is increasing. The world has now already heated by 1.5 degrees Centigrade for a full year; we can see how increasing adverse weather events, pollution, environmental degradation, and resource scarcity have already started to negatively impact trade, food supplies, social and geopolitical stability, biodiversity etc. and are costing our country billions of dollars.

SCAN does not agree that the Government should continue to use the NZ ETS as a key tool to encourage emissions reductions, stay within budgets and achieve the 2050 target. The NZ ETS has not achieved emission reductions because it is too easy to manipulate by businesses and politicians to their own advantage. High prices are not a deterrent for the well-off. Inequality should be reduced through taxes on capital gains, land, and inheritance etc. Alternative systems need to be considered to achieve the urgently required halving of emissions by 2030 to keep within planetary boundaries.

2. The Government is taking a 'net-based approach' that uses both emissions reductions and removals to reduce overall emissions in the atmosphere (rather than an approach that focuses only on reducing emissions at the source). A net-based approach is helpful for managing emissions in a cost-effective way that helps grow the economy and increase productivity in New Zealand.

What do you see as the key advantages of taking a net-based approach?

SCAN does not consider there are any key advantages of taking a net-based approach for the reasons given below.

What do you see as the key challenges to taking a net-based approach?

This approach suggests we can achieve the goal of removing and reducing our emissions using yet-to-be-developed technologies. The emphasis remains primarily on short term economic growth, but ignores the immense negative impact that occurs when we fail to act in a meaningful way now.

Reducing emissions at source is far more cost effective than to remove them from the atmosphere. Growing pine forests, only to then cut them down for timber sales or have them burn in droughts, is not effective and nor is offsetting by purchasing other's tree planting.

An effective approach must primarily acknowledge and address the true nature of climate change. Climate change is but only one of many symptoms of exceeding planetary boundaries caused by excessive mining and extraction and subsequent consumption of fossil fuels, minerals, and ecological resources by a population of 8 billion people which is still growing at the rate of 80 million people per year.

The expression "sustainable growth" is an oxymoron because sustained continued growth of an economy on a finite planet is a logical and physical impossibility. An effective approach must address this reality to be successful. Economic growth so far has already exceeded planetary boundaries and, at some stage, growth in the economy will cease whether planned or forced upon us. It is therefore in NZ's interests to now plan to thrive using fewer resources and play its part in adhering to global treaties to reduce emissions directly.

3. What, if any, other sectors or areas do you think have significant opportunities for cost-effective emissions reduction?

Almost half of all New Zealand's harmful greenhouse gases are produced by the agricultural sector when methane emissions are based on the IPCC convention of using a 100-year average CO₂ equivalent. But short-term methane has a much greater potency over 20 years for adding to global warming, a critical time frame for reducing global warming to avoid triggering tipping points which could lead to a cascade of irreversible climate change. It is imperative for NZ's agricultural sector to undertake immediate effective reductions in methane emissions. The strongest lever NZ can pull to reduce methane emissions quickly is to lower ruminant herd numbers by incentivising the sector to diversify. There are multiple benefits for us all, for instance by growing regenerative food, fibre crops, and agroforestry instead of forestry monoculture etc.

Cost effective emission reduction is easiest done by focusing on economic activities that increase biodiversity and community wellbeing within planetary boundaries and reduce those activities that are harmful.

Increasing biodiversity means

- growing native forests, regenerative farms, parks and gardens, wetlands, re-wilding erosion prone areas, expanding and protecting national parks, rivers, lakes, and oceans, etc.
- Taxing of destruction and pollution of natural areas

Increasing community wellbeing means

- facilitating local healthy food production (agroforestry, food co-ops, small scale market gardens, urban and community gardens, etc.
- facilitating practical skills transfer, in crafts and trades that serve basic needs
- living within bioregional carrying capacity, incentivising family planning
- facilitating biking and walking, public transport
- increasing green spaces, use of local materials and nature-based solutions in housing

4. What Maori- and iwi-led action to reduce emissions could benefit from government support?

Any Pakeha or Maori- and iwi-led action that increases biodiversity and the health of communities within planetary boundaries. For example, see the book '*Doughnut Economics*' under the webpage "Recommended Books" and '*The Community Wealth Building White Paper*' under the webpage "Recommended Articles" on our SCAN website.

Central to the Maori worldview is an integration of the people with the land and the cosmos. It is this fundamental understanding that will put us on the path to long term sustainability. It is therefore critical that a Māori world view informs all potential emission reduction initiatives, and that the New Zealand population is educated as to its importance.

Comments

See our comprehensive SCAN website for more background information and ideas:
www.seniorsclimateactionnetwork.org