

29 May 2024

Climate Change Commission

Wellington

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**Consultation response: Review of the 2050 emissions target, and Draft advice of the fourth emission budget period (2036-2040)**

Kāpiti Coast District Council (Council) welcomes the opportunity to submit a response to these two consultations.

Council would like to take this opportunity to voice its support for the Climate Change Commission's (the Commission's) role and importance of its work in providing independent advice to government. We would urge the Government to give this advice the weight it deserves to support future generations and our response to climate change challenges.

We acknowledge the need for governments to make decisions that balance the need for fiscal responsibility with the need to complete important climate related initiatives. Regardless, examples like the deferral of the Container Return Scheme in 2023, demonstrate the need for a strong voice to prevent missed opportunities that could make a real difference.

This letter is a joint response to both the consultation on the *Review of the 2050 emissions target* and the *Draft advice on the fourth emissions budget period (2036-2040)*.

**1. Review of the 2050 net zero emissions target**

Council appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback to the Commission's review of New Zealand's emissions reduction target, which is required in the Climate Change Response Act 2002 (the Act) to occur every five years, beginning from 2024.

Kāpiti Coast district declared a state of climate emergency in 2019, and in 2023 established a new "aspirational" long-term target of achieving net-zero, or cutting greenhouse gas emissions to as close to zero, by 2040.

We agree with your position that target setting is a matter of judgement, and that balancing different factors in regard to what is technologically and economically possible is important.

Under chapters 2 and 3 you have asked, *do you agree with our approach to assessing how the current 2050 target contributes to global efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C and do you agree with our approach to looking for significant change?*

It is sobering and disappointing to note that New Zealand / Aotearoa is not currently on-track to achieve its 50 per cent net emissions target by 2030; and that the rest of the world is also not on-track to limit global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees C above pre-industrial levels, deemed necessary by the International Panel on Climate Change to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

New Zealand/Aotearoa needs to play its part in tackling the climate crisis and support a robust international effort, to meet our obligations to future generations and to our Pacific neighbours that are particularly susceptible to sea level rise and severe weather events caused by climate change.

Council supports the Commission's approach in principle for reviewing the 2050 net zero emissions target including to provide an independent and impartial evidence-base to support reviewing and potentially resetting the existing target.

We note that engagement with communities is an important step to take, however, our experience in discussing climate change with our own community indicates differing levels of awareness, understanding, and perspective on this matter.

We believe that the proposal to focus on simple messaging and practical steps and actions will be more favourably supported by communities. Further, it is important that the evidence base includes qualitative and quantitative information presented in an engaging and public friendly way (such as photos illustrating visible changes in our environment).

Under Chapter 4 you have asked, *are there any issues or impacts related to people and/or the climate that you want the Commission, and eventually the Government, to consider and prioritise when reviewing the 2050 target?*

Achieving any meaningful district and national emission reduction targets is heavily dependent on government leadership and financial support, namely for active low carbon transport infrastructure (cycling, walking, and public transport), more energy efficient homes and buildings, and for extensive tree planting, including native planting (carbon sequestration).

Council welcomes the government's plans for new electric vehicle charging infrastructure. However, we believe a stronger focus on emissions prevention is necessary. Investment should be prioritised for public and active transport infrastructure to achieve the greatest emissions reduction and reducing reliance on private car use, delivering wider health and wellbeing benefits from less congestion and a more active population.

For our district, and nationally, making progress at the pace and scale required to urgently address the climate crisis and achieve targets, requires the Government to support practical steps such as:

- Reinststate funding for local cycling, walking, and public transport projects.
- Adopt [proposed amendments to the Building Act](#) to introduce energy ratings and waste minimisation plans for new homes and buildings, and widespread adoption of

initiatives such as the [Living Building Challenge](#) The [Ōtaki campus of Te Wānanga o Raukawa](#) in our district is a fantastic example of what can be achieved.

- Provide funding for extensive tree planting to sequester carbon emissions, with a focus on native planting.

## **2. Draft advice of the fourth emission budget period (2036-2040)**

Council welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the fourth emissions budget which the coalition Government will consider. We recognise the importance of accelerating efforts to achieve significant greenhouse gas emissions reductions through to, and beyond, the fourth emissions budget period.

Council supports in principle the [Commission's six recommendations](#), on page 29, on establishing budgets and measurement to track-progress to put New Zealand on a path for rapid decarbonisation.

In response to your question in Chapter 4: Sector contributions, regarding meeting the fourth emissions budget and "*whether the changes we assume across sectors are plausible and achievable, and whether there is any additional evidence or insights that could contribute to our analysis*", we wish to raise concerns about:

- The reliance on the transport sector to deliver the greatest proportion of emissions reduction. The transport sector is proposed to contribute 46 per cent of the reduction, and it is not clear that there is a funding plan or energy strategy to support doing so.
- The reliance on significant exotic forest planting to remove carbon, and that the New Zealand's Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) settings are too reliant on planting trees instead of making real emissions reductions. To provide clarity to the ETS market and better incentivise gross emissions reductions at source, Council urges the coalition Government to review the ETS in line with the [Commission's previous emissions budget advice](#) (Recommendation 4a) and the recent [OECD Economic Surveys Report: NZ 2024](#).

We would also emphasise the need for:

- Stronger government leadership through a clear and robust national policy framework that accelerates a just transition to a low carbon-circular economy.
- Acknowledging the important role that local government has in supporting communities to implement climate change activity, in helping New Zealand Aotearoa to meet its emissions reduction targets and be resilient to a changing climate.
- Immediate additional funding, outside of rates revenues, to be allocated to local government to enable more action and support for local communities and businesses in the transition that is required.
- Accelerating plans to adopt a National Energy Strategy combining efficient energy generation and use, emissions reduction, and energy security.

Council notes that partnership between local, regional and national government is essential to help New Zealanders transition to a low-emissions and climate resilient future, and that this work is a matter of urgency to meet the needs of current and future generations.

Yours sincerely



Janet Holborow

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**KĀPITI COAST DISTRICT COUNCIL**



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