

Federated Mountain Clubs of NZ
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15 July 2019

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Bill

1. FMC represents 22,000 members of over 80 tramping, climbing and other outdoor recreation clubs throughout New Zealand, and also the interests and concerns of the estimated 300,000 New Zealanders who enjoy backcountry recreation. FMC was formed in 1932.
2. FMC, and its members are deeply concerned about the impacts of climate change on the country that we love. Whilst on the face of it self-powered outdoor recreation such as tramping, mountaineering, cross country skiing, paragliding, packrafting and canyoning may appear to be environmentally sustainable, the carbon impact of the transport associated with our activities is large, along with the maintenance of the hut and track network. The same is true of the largely offshored carbon impact of modern outdoor gear, and the myriad other services associated with living a “modern” lifestyle.
3. Energy is the flip side of climate change, and the key to addressing it.
4. “Technology” and “energy” are often conflated and assumed to be the same. It is an often unstated assumption in climate work that “technology will advance and fix the climate issue”. However, they are vastly different matters, and the underlying energy trend data does not paint such a rosy

picture. All technology can do is harness existing energy, and whilst there are many existing and promising renewable technologies which harvest energy, renewable energy systems tend to have far less energy returned from any given level of energy investment (EROI) than non-renewable sources. This should not preclude their use - far from it, however, utilising renewable energy across a country requires substantial and far-reaching system change. However, despite energy being the driver of economies, and life supporting systems itself, this Bill does not mention “energy”, except in the context of emissions accounting. This omission may limit the scope of the Commission in an area that it must focus on. NZ can transition to a low carbon economy, but only if the extent of the task ahead is made clear.

5. FMC thus supports the Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Bill in principle as an important first step in establishing a regulatory framework for addressing climate change. FMC has recently adopted the concept of a “recreation transition”, to encourage our members to change their recreation patterns to be lighter on the earth. That can mean fewer or no overseas holidays if air travel is involved, and focusing more on local areas for recreation, rather than long distance travel within New Zealand, although this can and should still occur with appropriate planning (such as shared transport, and use of electric vehicles).

6. However this Bill falls short of these goals, in providing mainly for reports on climate risk assessment and adaptation plans, as well as regular NZ Greenhouse Gas Inventories. It appears to be primarily about information and reporting only. Apart from establishing a Commission itself, it is not clear how the required societal change will result from the Bill in its current form, nor how central government will direct that change. I will explain this in more detail below:

7. Fossil fuels and methane are New Zealand's primary contribution to global emissions. Over 60% of New Zealand's domestic primary energy supply comes from coal, oil, or gas. 40% of New Zealand's domestic primary energy supply is renewable, in the form of renewably generated electricity or biomass. ~80% of electricity in a normal hydrological year is currently from renewable sources¹. (We also note that the survey on which these statistics are based was discontinued in June 2019 for reasons of cost², and we consider this to be short-sighted, given the central importance of energy statistics).

8. This is a relatively high level of contributions from renewables when compared with other developed nations, however, the majority of work in our economy is still performed by fossil fuels. Critically, agriculture (apart from the sunlight and water) and transport remain highly dominated by fossil fuels. FMC's members make heavy use of private motor vehicles for transport for instance.

9. Addressing these hard parts of the economy makes climate change an infrastructure issue. However, we note no clear statement to that effect in the purpose of the Bill. Similarly, I note that a Bill to set up an Infrastructure Commission is before the Finance and Expenditure Committee. It has a function including:

matters relating to the mitigation of the effects of climate change (including through reducing emissions of greenhouse gases) and adapting to the effects of climate change; and

s11(b)(iii) New Zealand Infrastructure Commission/Te Waihangā Bill

¹Energy in New Zealand, 2018; Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment; www.mbie.govt.nz/info-services/sectors-industries/energy/energy-data-modelling/publications/energy-in-new-zealand

² <https://www.stats.govt.nz/news/four-surveys-to-end>

10. Given the overlap in the work between the two Commissions, and if climate change and the need for an energy transition is to be taken seriously, we would encourage the following insertion to link the two Commissions:

“5J(j) to engage with the New Zealand Infrastructure Commission / Te Waihanga on matters of mutual interest”

11. We also consider that given the central importance of energy in discussions about climate change, people, and the range of the possible, it is essential to include reference to this in the list of matters that the Commission should focus on:

5L - In performing its functions and duties and exercising its powers under this Act, the Commission must consider, where relevant,—

“functioning of renewable and non-renewable energy systems”

12. Climate change is one of the greatest challenges humanity faces. FMC commits to doing our part on behalf of the outdoor community to address it.

13. FMC requests to be heard in support of this submission.

Yours faithfully,

Phil Glasson

Secretary

Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand.