

Appendix 1



**Submission from the Wellington City Council on the proposed
2050 Emissions Reduction Target**

Submission to: Ministry for the Environment

**Submission on: 2050 Emissions Reduction Target
Consultation**

**From: Wellington City Council
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1. Introduction

1.1 The Wellington City Council ('the Council') welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Government's proposed 2050 Emissions Target.

1.2 The Council's submission is guided by the outcomes, priorities and advocacy actions in its 2009/19 Long Term Council Community Plan and its 2010 Climate Change Action Plan.

2. Background

2.1 The Council is committed to addressing the dual challenges of:

- reducing greenhouse gas emissions ('emissions') for Wellington
- planning and adapting for predicted climate impacts to protect Wellington's communities, businesses and infrastructure.

2.2 The Council agreed the 2010 Climate Change Action Plan in June 2010 to help guide the Council's investment and planning for responding to climate change. The Council has medium and long-term emissions reductions targets of:

- 3 percent net reduction of 2001 emissions by 2013
- 30 percent net reduction of 2001 emissions by 2020
- 80 percent net reduction of 2001 emissions by 2050.

3. Summary comments

3.1 The Council supports the Government in publishing a long-term emissions reduction target to inform its policy decisions and clearly signal the direction of climate change policy for councils, investors and the wider community.

3.2 The Council notes that scientific consensus (as outlined in the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change, IPCC)¹ suggests that by 2050 global emissions need to reduce by between 50 and 85 percent below year 2000 emission levels in order to achieve temperature stabilisation of +2 to +2.4 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. The Council also notes that earlier work by the IPCC suggested that developed countries (so-called Annex I Parties to the UN Climate Change Convention) would need to reduce emissions by between 80 and 95 percent below 1990 levels by 2050, if developing countries managed to "substantially deviate" their emissions below a 'business as usual' baseline.

3.3 The work of the IPCC suggests that New Zealand, along with other Annex I Parties, may need to do more than a 50 percent reduction on 1990 emissions by 2050 if the global community is to avoid the worst effects of climate change.

3.4 The Council also acknowledges that New Zealand's emissions profile (particularly the large proportion of emissions from agriculture), its fast growing population, and existing high rates of renewable electricity make it

¹ http://www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/ar4/syr/en/spms5.html

challenging to achieve emission reductions of greater than 50 percent. Indeed, advances in technologies/practices to reduce agricultural emissions will need to be made if New Zealand is to reach the Government's proposed target. If major advances can be made, however, it may be possible for New Zealand to make an even greater contribution to emissions reductions.

3.5 The Council believes that the Government should regularly review and update both its 2020 and 2050 targets in light of:

- advances in low-carbon technologies (especially relating to agriculture) or carbon-capture technologies
- international agreements on emissions trading and/or carbon taxes
- changes to the emissions targets of our trading partners and international partners
- scientific advice on prudent emissions reduction targets.

3.6 The Council supports the Emissions Trading Scheme and the utilisation of price-based measures as a key mechanism to reduce emissions.

3.7 The Council supports other complementary measures to reduce emissions including:

- the *Warm Up New Zealand: Heat Smart* programme
- programmes to incentivise afforestation, and in particular the Permanent Forest Sinks Initiative
- projects to help businesses reduce energy consumption
- investment and support for New Zealand's clean tech industries and the development of a low-carbon economy.

3.8 The Council believes the Government could be more pro-active with addressing emissions from the transport sector through improved priority and funding of public transport projects, projects that support active modes and support for alternative fuel technologies.

3.9 The Council believes that there are significant inconsistencies between the Government's proposed 2050 emissions target and its draft Energy Strategy. The draft Energy Strategy indicated a strong shift towards more utilisation of fossil fuels for stationary energy and transport fuels (including exploring coal to gasoline technologies). Should the Government pursue the draft Energy Strategy as it stands (coupled with New Zealand's agriculture emissions profile) it would be virtually impossible for New Zealand to meet the proposed 2050 emissions target. The Council urges the Government to review its various strategies and spending priorities to ensure they are consistent with the long-term direction expressed under the proposed 2050 target.

4. Conclusion

4.1 The Council is generally supportive of the Government's proposed 2050 emissions target of reducing New Zealand's net emissions 50 percent below 1990 levels. The Council feels that to achieve the proposed target, the Government will need to dedicate more resources in the form of:

- funding for research and innovation into the clean tech sector and technologies/practices to reduce emissions intensity of the agricultural sector
- maintain initiatives that promote afforestation (especially those that promote indigenous forestry)
- promote investment and resources toward public transport, low-carbon transport fuels and initiatives that support compact growth and active transport modes
- expanding energy efficiency programmes targeting households and businesses
- adopt an energy strategy that promotes a low-carbon economy, renewable energy and energy efficiency.

On behalf of Wellington City Council

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