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Tēnā koutou,

## **Submission to Draft advice to inform the strategic direction of the Government's second emissions reduction plan**

We are writing this submission as a collective of councils in the Greater Wellington Region. Overall, we are supportive of most of the draft advice recommendations, but we encourage *He Pou a Rangī - Climate Change Commission* to use its unique position to push for more ambitious action.

The urgency of acting on climate change is now very clear within each of our communities. With every new climate-related disaster event, such as with the recent devastation seen from Cyclone Gabrielle, the imperative to act swiftly and decisively is becoming increasingly pronounced.

As a collective of regional and local councils, we believe it is important that central government policy aligns with the latest science, and we support the role of the Commission in highlighting the evidence-based urgency of the issues we face. We need the Commission to be staunch champions when giving this advice so that an appropriately ambitious level of action can be taken to meet the challenges posed to all our communities.

Climate change mitigation and adaptation is now at the centre of our regional and local government decision making. It is therefore disappointing to note that while your draft advice clearly states the role of central government, there is very little detail on the role of local government. The regional and local government level is where a significant amount of decarbonising work is being done. Several Councils in our region already have climate change strategies in place for their operations and to support their residents to transition. And as a region, we are committed to creating zero-carbon communities with the built and social infrastructure that meets our needs and aspirations.

As part of our Regional Emissions Reduction Strategy (in development) our collective councils are working with the following draft aspirations.

**We believe that a flourishing, zero-carbon region has:**

- informed leadership who are honest about the scale of the crisis, willing to make tough decisions at pace and committed to bringing the community along on the journey.
- communities that are engaged and mobilised to live a low-carbon lifestyle, and have access to the knowledge, tools, and infrastructure needed to thrive. They are empowered to take urgent action now that will lead to a better quality of life.
- move with scale and pace to reduce emissions in ways which restore and enhance our unique natural and cultural taiao (environment).
- businesses, local and central government, developers, and primary industry sectors have the skills, products, and assets needed to help build an environmentally sustainable economy.
- shared climate action goals that will make immediate impact coupled with longer-term goals that will enable intergenerational change. A recognition that regional success is underpinned by local city and district action.
- sustainable prosperity that supports vulnerable communities and reduces inequality.

To create this flourishing, zero-carbon region we need central government to help address the barriers to electrifying energy supply, significantly increase public transport infrastructure, and create climate friendly urban form. We also need central government to ensure that the right frameworks are in place that follow tikanga Māori and respect Te Tiriti o Waitangi, with funding available to support mana whenua involvement.

With this in mind, we would like to see the following come through strongly in the government's second emissions reduction plan are:

- A commitment to be upfront with the public about the scale of the response required, communicating regularly about the challenges, and bringing the community along on the journey
- Investment in tactical on-the-ground education and support for communities, business, and mana whenua to shift their practices as the systems shift and more options become available.
- Funding to support a Māori-led approach to an equitable transition for Iwi/Māori and the Māori economy
- A significant increase in investment to transform the transport sector, as well as the supporting policy positions. For example, Wales has committed to only investing in roading projects that improve active and public transport.
- Investing in the energy system to enable the shift away from fossil-fuel based energy sources, including petrol, diesel and fossil gas to electricity.
- Start the conversation now on which sources of emissions in which sectors are going to be the hardest to remove from our economy, to give clarity to business on which sectors will need to remove fossil fuel consumption from their business models by 2050.

- Make sure all new policy positions from all parts of govt align with the emissions reduction plan, and don't undermine the achievement of carbon budgets.
- A willingness to make tough decisions at pace in recognition of the climate emergency declared by Aotearoa in 2019.
- Maintained commitment to a fair, inclusive and equitable transition, including specific policy addressing the intersection between disability, accessibility and climate action.

In summary, as regional and local councils we need the Commission's advice to highlight the importance of central government support to enable local government to respond to climate change and reduce emissions in their local communities. We look forward to seeing, in the government's second emissions reduction plan, greater clarity, funding and targeted regulation to support local government to locally act on the national climate change response.

Nāku noa, nā,

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