

26 January 2017

Media Release

EDS calls for improvements in draft energy efficiency strategy

The Environmental Defence Society (EDS) has released its submission on the draft New Zealand Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy (NEECS). It has called for an economy-wide target for energy efficiency, and for sector targets that have some substance.

“In our view energy efficiency is a vital component of our overall effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as well as improving our economic productivity,” said EDS Director and submission author Professor Barry Barton.

“Energy efficiency complements the Emissions Trading Scheme and the Government’s Business Growth Agenda by bringing focus and tangible policy initiatives to the way we use energy in our economy.

“On industrial energy, we are surprised that the target proposed is only the business-as-usual forecast figure. It seems pretty obvious that a target should be for something better than what is probably going to happen anyway. We believe that this target should be changed to show an intention for actual improvement.

“We are also concerned that this target, for industrial emissions of greenhouse gases, is an intensity target. Whilst we agree that energy intensity per unit of production is vitally important, we’d like to see absolute targets included in the strategy. We need to get to zero net emissions of greenhouse gases by mid-century and that will require fundamental shifts in energy use. The strategy needs to help make those shifts.

“The other specific target in the draft strategy is for 2% of the vehicle fleet to be electric by 2021. This is what the government announced in May 2016. We are fully in favour of electric vehicles. But we are concerned that the strategy does nothing to improve the other vehicles on our roads. Internal combustion engine vehicles will dominate for many years to come. For them, it’s crucially important that New Zealand introduces mandatory fuel efficiency standards. Most developed countries have such standards, and they benefit enormously from the resulting improvements in their vehicle fleets. The Government announced a commitment to work on standards last year, but they have yet to materialize.

“On renewable electricity, New Zealand has an important and oft-quoted target of moving towards 90% renewable electricity generation by 2025, subject to security of supply. But we are bemused by its omission from the draft strategy, and we strongly believe that it should be brought forward and included in the strategy as a formal target.

“Overall the draft is a good start but needs amendments, and it needs further elaboration on how the targets are going to be achieved,” said Barry Barton.

See the full submission [here](#)