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Media Release

EDS welcomes National's support for Climate Commission



The Environmental Defence Society has welcomed National's commitment to the development of an independent Climate Commission.

"Simon Bridges quite rightly says that it's vital with such a long-lived policy challenge to get the right institutional arrangements in place and for them to endure over time," said EDS CEO Gary Taylor.

"That is consistent with advice from the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment and the Productivity Commission. It is also common sense.

"The Government is currently consulting on the Zero Carbon Bill which will establish the Commission. That is something EDS has been encouraging via expert presentations at its annual *Australia – New Zealand Climate Change and Business Conference*. Submissions close on 19 July.

"We have profiled the equivalent entity in the United Kingdom, the UK Climate Committee, as a useful and workable model. That initiative was made possible with bi-partisan support in the UK Parliament.

"In the New Zealand context the approach needs to be one that all major parties in our Parliament support and with National coming to the party, we now have that.

"The building consensus is welcome but not yet complete. There are some big questions still in play: how should adaptation to the effects of climate change be planned and managed? Is the argument that we should divide our greenhouse gases into two categories valid? How do we ensure that the Commission maintains credibility and independence when there is so much at stake?

"Mr Bridges' Fieldays speech also indicated that he has his caucus team working on a review of National's broader environmental policies. That is also very welcome. Progressive environmental policies should be embedded across all parties – that's a lesson to draw from the last election.

"There will of course be devil in the detail. Support for continuing oil exploration is an approach that National needs to think more carefully about. Ultimately our Government is right that carbon fuels needs to be left in the ground if we are to stabilise greenhouse gases.

"But getting a Climate Change Commission in place to plan the least cost, long-term transition to a net zero economy is the best way forward. National's commitment to that is welcome," Mr Taylor concluded.