



Cabinet talking points - Aligning climate and biodiversity policy in the emissions reduction plan

Date Submitted:	17 March 2022	Tracking #: BRF-1353
-----------------	---------------	----------------------

	Action sought:
Hon James SHAW, Minister of Climate Change	Note the attached talking points prior to CBC on 21 March 2021

Actions for Minister's Office Staff	N/A
Number of appendices and attachments 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Talking points to support discussion on the Cabinet paper <i>Aligning climate and biodiversity policy in the emissions reduction plan</i> Questions and answers to support discussion on the Cabinet paper <i>Aligning climate and biodiversity policy in the emissions reduction plan</i>

Ministry for the Environment contacts

Position	Name	Cell phone	1st contact
Principal Author	Selina Reichert		
Responsible Manager	Kate Ryan	§ 9(2)(a)	✓
Director	Melody Guy		

Cabinet talking points - Aligning climate and biodiversity policy in the emissions reduction plan

Purpose

1. This aide memoir provides you with talking points (Appendix 1) and questions and answers (Appendix 2) to support discussion on the Cabinet paper *Aligning climate and biodiversity policy in the emissions reduction plan* at the Cabinet Business Committee (CBC).
2. This paper is joint between you and the Minister of Conservation and will be considered at CBC on 21 March 2022, ahead of Cabinet on Monday 28 March 2022.

Signature

Kate Ryan Acting Manager Emissions reduction plan	
Date: 17 March 2022	

Appendix 1: Talking points to support discussion on the Cabinet paper *Aligning climate and biodiversity policy in the emissions reduction plan*

1. **The emissions reduction plan (ERP) presents an opportunity to address the climate and biodiversity crises together.**
 - Aligning policy to address climate change and biodiversity loss can accelerate progress in both areas. Without alignment, there is a risk that actions in one area undermine, or work against, outcomes in the other.
 - i. For example, restoring wetlands and appropriate riparian planting can sequester carbon, support biodiversity, and improve freshwater quality.
2. **Nature-based solutions are one way to integrate climate and biodiversity policy.**
 - Nature-based solutions can directly sequester carbon, increase resilience to climate change impacts and support biodiversity and wider environmental outcomes.
 - i. For example, coastal wetlands can sequester emissions, protect against sea-level rise and provide habitats for indigenous species.
 - Nature-based solutions are widely endorsed by the agricultural industry, tangata whenua and other landowners who are impacted by environmental regulation.
3. **This paper seeks to drive alignment between climate and biodiversity policy across the ERP by:**
 - proposing a guiding principle for the ERP that: climate mitigation policies, planning and regulation should protect, enhance and restore nature where possible, and any impacts on nature should be mitigated as much as possible.
 - proposing that nature-based solutions be prioritised where possible, for adaptation and carbon sequestration, because of the multiple benefits they provide.
 - proposing that impacts on biodiversity are included in ERP reporting.
4. **An integrated work programme bringing together workstreams led by MPI, MfE and DOC will be established to deliver climate, biodiversity and wider environmental benefits. It will cover:**
 - Improving incentives for and removing barriers to native restoration and afforestation;
 - Developing an evidence base for the carbon sequestration potential of native ecosystems;
 - Considering how offsetting under the Carbon Neutral Government Programme can support native afforestation and restoration of indigenous vegetation; and
 - Investigating incentives for public and private investment in biodiversity.

Appendix 2: Question and answers to support discussion on the Cabinet paper *Aligning climate and biodiversity policy in the ERP*

1. What does aligning climate and biodiversity mean in practice?

- It will depend on the context surrounding a decision or policy, similar to how the impacts on climate change, populations or human rights are considered.
- Broadly it means considering the costs and co-benefits to biodiversity and wider environmental outcomes, when developing climate policy. The Cabinet paper proposes an analytical lens that could be applied (outlined for context below).

○ s 9(2)(f)(iv)

2. What does prioritisation of nature-based solutions mean in practice?

- This will depend on the context. Broadly, it means that, all other things being equal, solutions that enhance nature should be prioritised over those that don't.
- We are open to suggestions as to how we could better embed this lens in practice and have flagged in this Cabinet paper that more work will be done on this.

s 9(2)(g)(i)

3. What will the financial impacts of aligning climate and biodiversity policy be?

- In some cases, nature-based solutions can be cheaper than hard engineered solutions. For example, dune and wetland planting will usually be less expensive than building seawalls to manage the impacts of sea level rise.
- The benefits that nature-based solutions provide across adaptation, mitigation and wider environmental outcomes will often make them a cost-effective option for realising multiple government goals.

• s 9(2)(f)(iv)

- There is also potential for significant fiscal risks if climate and biodiversity policy are poorly aligned. For example, reliance on large-scale expansion of exotic forestry creates the need for increased spending on controlling wilding pines.