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Media Release: A Zero Carbon Act for New Zealand

The Environmental Defence Society says that the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment's latest report is "a compelling read from someone who knows what he's talking about."

The report, *A Zero Carbon Act for New Zealand*, is the first from the new Commissioner Simon Upton. It builds on an earlier review by his predecessor and sets out a way forward for both the content of the proposed Zero Carbon Act and also the process for getting it enacted.

"Simon Upton has stressed the need to achieve a multi-party agreement on this important legislation given the long-term nature of the climate challenge and the need for a consistent approach across many years," said EDS CEO Gary Taylor.

"We strongly agree with that. It is what happened in the UK and why that model has durability.

"Like Mr Upton, we consider that the proposed Climate Commission is the keystone entity for planning New Zealand's transition to a zero carbon future. The idea of an independent Commission should attract broad support. The potentially more difficult question concerns how it should operate and where the respective responsibilities of government and Commission should lie.

"Mr Upton has given careful thought to those issues and we'll give that proper consideration as we work through our own reform ideas. The approach of preparing carbon budgets, setting targets and monitoring progress makes good sense.

"One issue that we find a little underwhelming is his open-ended attitude to adaptation. He agrees there's a need for a national strategy but not sure who should do it.

"Given New Zealand's vulnerability to the effects of climate change – increased floods, droughts, storm surges and other extreme weather events – we think that a national strategy is enormously important and should rest firmly with the proposed Commission.

"The alternative of leaving it to an existing government agency is not attractive. We need an expert entity to prepare a strategy and if the Commission is properly configured, that's where responsibility should lie.

"The report is a useful contribution and properly directed to Parliament as a whole. Let's hope its members are listening," Mr Taylor concluded.