

Environment (Disestablishment of Ministry for the Environment) Amendment Bill

Climate Justice Taranaki Submission to the Parliamentary Environment Committee

11th March 2026

1. Founded in 2010 and incorporated in 2015, Climate Justice Taranaki (CJT) is dedicated to justice, action and true solutions to climate change. Our vision is founded on, and underpinned by, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the founding document of government in Aotearoa New Zealand.
2. Composed of a broad range of people with varied expertise and life experiences, CJT has engaged with the government at all levels on numerous matters and submitted on many bills and policies. Our members are gravely concerned about the government's push for an increasingly utilitarian, neo-liberalism driven approach to exploiting our land, rivers and sea, at the expense of the environment, community wellbeing and long-term sustainability and resilience of Aotearoa as a nation.
3. We are strongly opposed to the Environment (Disestablishment of Ministry for the Environment) Amendment Bill¹ which would disestablish the Ministry for the Environment.
4. The Ministry for the Environment (MfE) plays an essential role in informing government decisions that affect all aspects of the environment which provide for our local, regional, national and global life support system. The new mega Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport (MCERT) would effectively silence the sole voice for the environment and the critical assessment of policies and projects in the name of economic growth and development. MfE is the voice for the environment within government and needs to be much strengthened, not disestablished.
5. Globally we have breached seven of the nine planetary boundaries²: Climate change, biosphere integrity, land system change, freshwater use, biogeochemical flows, novel entities, and ocean acidification. Within the planetary boundaries is 'a safe operating space' for humanity and for Aotearoa³. Beyond them, we enter dangerous territories where Earth's life-support system fails and societies break down.
6. While blessed with natural assets, Aotearoa has suffered immense losses of biodiversity and ecological degradation since colonisation and increasingly through the expansion of industrial agriculture, destructive fishing, fossil fuel and mineral mining, residential, roads and other infrastructural development.
7. The current coalition government is especially ignorant and arrogant, taking Aotearoa into the 'war on nature', ignoring the reality that social wellbeing and economic sustainability relies on a healthy environment and functioning ecosystems⁴. The number of anti-environmental initiatives⁵ spearheaded by this government, from weakening NZ's emissions reduction commitment to fast-tracking gold and coal mining⁶, has been shocking and shameful. It is undermining the foundation and identity of Aotearoa and the rights of future generations. This government is not fit to govern.

¹ Environment (Disestablishment of Ministry for the Environment) Amendment Bill

<https://www.legislation.govt.nz/bill/government/2026/249/en/latest/#LMS1573387>

² Stockholm Resilience Centre, 4 Sept 2025. *Seven of nine planetary boundaries now breached.*

<https://www.stockholmresilience.org/news--events/general-news/2025-09-24-seven-of-nine-planetary-boundaries-now-breached.html>

³ *A safe operating space for New Zealand/Aotearoa – Translating the planetary boundaries framework*, 2020.

<https://environment.govt.nz/assets/publications/Files/a-safe-operating-space-for-nz-aotearoa-2020.pdf>

⁴ Nate Hagens, 25 Feb 2026. *The biophysical pyramid.* [https://natehagens.substack.com/p/essay-the-](https://natehagens.substack.com/p/essay-the-biophysical-pyramid)

[biophysical-pyramid](https://natehagens.substack.com/p/essay-the-biophysical-pyramid)

⁵ Russel Norman, Nov 2025. *Luxon's war on nature timeline.* <https://www.greenpeace.org/aotearoa/story/luxons-war-on-nature-timeline/>

⁶ Projects listed or referred to follow the Fast-track process under the Fast-track Approvals Act.

<https://www.fasttrack.govt.nz/projects?query=%21showall&f.Project+Sector%7CprojectSector=Mining%2Fquarrying>