NZCPR POLITICAL PARTY CLIMATE POLICY 2026

Executive Summary

The 2026 election presents New Zealanders with a stark choice over climate and environmental policy. The political blocs are divided not just on emissions targets and regulatory settings, but on the fundamental question of whether climate policy should prioritise economic growth and scientific realism, or aggressive emissions reduction, regulatory expansion, and ideological transformation.

The governing Coalition of National, ACT, and New Zealand First supports a market-led, ETS-based approach, opposes agricultural emissions pricing, rejects punitive climate taxes, and prioritises economic productivity, technological innovation, and land-use flexibility. Their policies aim to reduce regulatory burdens, protect rural New Zealand, and prevent climate bureaucracy from overriding democratic accountability.

Labour, the Greens, the Maori Party, and TOP support Paris-aligned emissions targets, expanded regulation, and large-scale public spending. Their policies include stronger ETS obligations including for agriculture, binding emissions caps, the reinstatement of the ban on offshore oil and gas exploration, Treaty-led climate governance, and constitutional-style entrenchment of climate policy.

Some parties are pushing for the radical transformation of the economy, public institutions, and governance structures under climate-justice and Te Tiriti frameworks.

Most New Zealanders are unaware of how extreme these proposals have become. The left bloc's climate agenda would dramatically expand state control over land use, energy, transport, agriculture, and private insurance — while embedding Treaty-based governance into climate law, regulation, and international negotiations.

This report summarises the party positions and outlines the profound policy divide facing voters at Election 2026.

Where the Parties Stand

Climate policy is one of the most polarising issues of the 2026 election. The divide is not simply about emissions targets — it is about the role of government, the future of agriculture, the cost of living, and whether climate governance should be under democratic control or Treaty-based authority.

At one end are parties emphasising economic growth, scientific realism, and market mechanisms. While at the other are parties seeking aggressive emissions reductions, expanded regulation, and climate governance grounded in Te Tiriti and climate-justice ideology.

Party Scorecard

✓ supports ✗ opposes ~ mixed/unclear

Issue	National	ACT	NZ First	Labour	Greens	TPM	TOP
Paris Agreement	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Agricultural emissions pricing	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Oil and gas exploration ban	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Climate curriculum mandates	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tikanga/Treaty governance	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Climate bureaucracy expansion	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Major climate spending packages	~	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓

Party-by-Party Policy Overview

National — Market-Led Climate Policy & Technological Innovation

National supports climate action through the ETS, scientific innovation, and economic growth. It rejects agricultural emissions pricing and opposes regulatory overreach.

Key actions:

- Streamline the Climate Change Response Act and improve ETS efficiency.
- Keep agriculture out of the ETS.
- Invest $400m in methane-reduction technologies.
- Allow land-use flexibility and curb carbon forestry on productive land.
- Commit to remaining in the Paris Agreement.

Bottom line: National backs climate action through markets, science, and productivity — not punitive taxes or regulatory expansion.

ACT New Zealand — Science-Based Climate Policy & Lower Carbon Costs

ACT rejects Net Zero 2050, opposes climate taxes, and prioritises economic realism.

Key actions:

- Repeal the Zero Carbon Act and scrap Net Zero 2050.
- Reduce carbon prices and return carbon tax revenue to households.
- Keep agriculture out of the ETS.
- Abolish the Climate Change Commission.
- Oppose carbon-forestry distortions.
- Support innovation over regulation.
- Renegotiate a better deal for NZ under the Paris Agreement – or withdraw.

Bottom line: ACT seeks a climate policy grounded in science, affordability, and economic competitiveness.

New Zealand First — Withdraw from the Paris Agreement

New Zealand First argues that New Zealand's emissions are too small to justify costly international commitments.

Key actions:

- Withdraw from the Paris Agreement.
- Oppose climate taxes and agricultural emissions pricing.
- Support ETS-only climate policy.

Bottom line: New Zealand First rejects international climate obligations that impose costs without meaningful global impact.

Labour — Accelerated Climate Action & Stronger ETS

Labour supports Paris-aligned emissions targets, stronger ETS settings, and expanded climate regulation.

Key actions:

- Urgently review and strengthen the ETS but keep agriculture out.
- Reinstate the ban on offshore oil and gas exploration.
- Reinstate climate change in schools curricula.
- Increase carbon prices to drive emissions reductions.

- Support solar financing through SolarSaver.

Bottom line: Labour backs stronger regulation, higher carbon prices, and Paris-aligned climate commitments.

Green Party — Radical Climate Transformation & Fossil-Fuel Ban

The Greens support a full fossil-fuel phase-out by 2035 and climate governance grounded in Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Key actions:

- Refocus on the de-industrialisation of the New Zealand economy
- Legally binding end to fossil-fuel extraction and production by 2035.
- Expand ETS to all sectors and all gases.
- Grant binding powers to the Climate Change Commission.
- Embed Te Tiriti in all climate law and international negotiations.
- Rebuild the economy around ecological limits and Maori authority.

Bottom line: The Greens seek a radical climate transformation that replaces growth-based economics with Treaty-centred ecological governance.

Maori Party — Climate Justice & Maori Authority

The Maori Party frames climate change as a threat to Maori land, food systems, and cultural continuity that demand solutions grounded in tikanga, matauranga Maori and Te Tiriti through "radical system-wide transformation".

Key actions:

- Total ban on all onshore and offshore oil and gas permits.
- Introduce all agricultural emissions into the ETS.
- $1b funding for solar uptake for Maori.
- $300m for Maori farmers to transition from dairying.
- Maori-led climate adaptation and resilience hubs.
- International advocacy for climate justice and Pasifika relocation.

Bottom line: TPM seeks climate governance grounded in Maori authority, climate justice, and anti-extraction ideology.

The Opportunity Party — Climate Resilience & Entrenched Climate Governance

TOP supports strong emissions reductions, major climate spending, and long-term entrenchment of climate policy.

Key actions:

- $5b Climate Resilience Fund.
- Electrification incentives for homes, transport, and industry.
- National Insurance Support Framework to intervene in private insurance markets.
- Strengthen ETS and include agriculture.
- Reinforce all Paris targets.
- Lock in climate policy across political cycles.

Bottom line: TOP backs high-cost climate resilience programmes and long-term institutional entrenchment of climate policy.

What the Choice Means for Voters

New Zealanders face two fundamentally different climate futures:

1. Market-Led Climate Policy & Economic Growth

National, ACT, NZ First

- ETS-based climate action
- No methane tax
- No agricultural emissions pricing
- Lower regulatory burdens
- Technology-led solutions
- Economic growth and productivity

2. Regulatory Expansion & Climate Transformation

Labour, Greens, Maori Party, TOP

- Stronger ETS obligations
- Agricultural emissions pricing
- Fossil-fuel bans

- Climate curriculum mandates
- Treaty-based climate governance
- Major public spending and regulatory expansion

These are the choices facing voters at Election 2026.

Conclusion

New Zealand stands at a climate policy crossroads. One path prioritises economic growth, scientific realism, and market-based climate action. The other seeks aggressive emissions reductions, expanded regulations, a stronger commitment to the international Paris Agreement, and climate governance grounded in Te Tiriti and climate-justice ideology.

The stakes are high — for farmers, businesses, households, and the future shape of New Zealand's economy and governance.

This report summarises the facts.

The choice now lies with the public.