

The Hon Greg Hunt MP

2 June, 2014

Minister for the Environment
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

Thank you for your letter of 12 May, 2014 and for your congratulations on my election to the Senate. Thank you also for your offer to provide a briefing on the Australian Government's proposed Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF).

In the Executive Summary of the ERF White Paper it is stated that the Government 'accepts the science of climate change' ie anthropogenic global warming (AGW) which postulates that 'as emissions increase, temperatures will increase', resulting in catastrophic consequences. The paper further states that the Government supports national and international efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Notwithstanding this uncritical acceptance of AGW, as you would be aware there are many unanswered questions about the science of AGW. The most obvious of these relates to the periods 1940 - 1980 (40 years) and 1997 - 2014 (17 years) when emissions increased significantly yet no increase in global temperatures was recorded.

The latest report by the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC Summary for Policy Makers) released on 31 March claims that "*it is extremely likely that human influence has been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century*", yet the report offers no explanation as to why temperatures did not increase during the above periods. Further, the report acknowledges there is "*continued uncertainty about the severity and timing of climate change impacts*." I note also that whilst the White Paper refers to advice rendered by the IPCC it makes no reference to the advice of the NIPCC (Non-Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change).

Significantly, there is also now a debate amongst scientists as to whether the current decline in the sun's activity will actually lead to global cooling! Some scientists are predicting a repeat of the 1645 - 1715 'Maunder Minimum' which was a very cold period indeed. It would be ironic if, after spending vast amounts of taxpayers' money (\$15 billion per annum according to some estimates) on action to reduce emissions in order to prevent 'dangerous global warming', that we were about to experience a colder, rather than warmer climate.

It is commonplace I know to hear the refrain, '*the science is settled*', however it is quite obvious from the above — particularly comments by the NIPCC, that this area of science is quite un-settled. In light of the above, it is clear 'there is a need for an inquiry into this whole matter and that such an inquiry should be held before implementing the policies contained in the White Paper.

As for a 'global agreement' on emissions reductions, as we know, over 60 per cent of emissions originate in poorer countries which rely on cheap fossil fuel for energy and have no intention whatsoever of reducing their use. It makes no sense therefore for Australia to voluntarily implement an emissions reduction program when no prospect of any such global agreement is likely.

In addition to all this, as a Family First Senator I am particularly disturbed by the prediction that by 2020 the cost of electricity in Australia will be threefold what it is today due to the large amount of renewables being forced into the system. The impact on low and middle income households who do not have the resources to buy photovoltaic systems - even with government subsidies, but still have to contribute, through their taxes, to those who are able to purchase such systems, will be severe indeed.

It is now abundantly clear that the Renewable Energy Target scheme should never have been enacted and plans for an Emissions Reduction Fund should be put on hold until a comprehensive inquiry has been held.

Thank you again for your letter

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