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Prime Minister
Hon John Key
Executive Wing
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON

Dear Prime Minister

DARE TO BE DIFFERENT

Prime Minister, you have entered Parliament untainted by union, educational, sectoral, public service, institutional or political party baggage. In your short few years as an MP you have been a breath of fresh air to the National Party and now to the country as Prime Minister.

Please do not risk the opportunity to be a very successful and enduring Prime Minister and contributor to the fabric of New Zealand by allowing your Government to persist with implementing the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) ahead of our key international trade partners and before we can be unequivocally sure the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) have ‘got it right’.

You have three sound reasons to “take a breather” right now:

- You have in place the framework for an ETS system which can be implemented at short notice (as it can be deferred at short notice);
- Our key trading partners are not about to implement ETS or equivalent. You have to ask yourself “Why?” It appears because there is no longer the broad political support for “Cap and Trade” or “ETS” schemes amongst their constituents. And why is that?
- Pre ‘Climategate’, ‘Climategate’ and the now implemented InterAcademy Council Review of the IPCC¹ has underlined the growing global mistrust of the IPCC process, conducted on our government’s behalf, and thus the policy response now required.

My view from the “sticks” is that our ministerial departments and process (MAF, Ministry For Climate Science, MFAT) appear absolutely imbedded in the IPCC mantra (arguably, reasonably so: as a signatory to the IPCC New Zealand, along with others, has tasked the IPCC to conduct its assessments on ‘a comprehensive, objective, open and transparent basis’², and one may be entitled to assume the IPCC has delivered on that obligation).

¹ InterAcademy Council (IAC) IPCC Review Committee.

<http://reviewipcc.interacademycouncil.net/IACNamesIPCCReviewCommittee.html>

² Clause 2 of IPCC’s original 1988 Governing Principles

It is the view of many (probably now a majority given the back down in Australia and USA³, to name two countries) that this obligation on the IPCC has not been met.⁴

Prime Minister, you have clearly demonstrated from your past commercial experience that you can make the tough and shrewd calls. This one then is a no brainer. You have a ‘get out of jail free’ card up your sleeve (ETS legislated) if you now choose to ‘sit on the fence’ - ‘stop for a cup of tea’.

Why do this? I put it to you that our government system is not capable of giving you or your key Ministers sound unbiased advice on this subject. The very people our people talk to are also trapped in the same IPCC mantra – a vicious ‘policy’ circle, as signatories to and advocates of the IPCC process.

Prime Minister, you are the only one who can stand aside from the mainstream and make this deferent call for the reasons identified in the first paragraph above – you not being institutionalised into ‘group think’.

The University of Pennsylvania Law School, Institute for Law and Economics has published (First Draft, September 2008, revised edition May 2010) a research paper “Global Warming Advocacy Science: a Cross Examination”⁵ which I suggest you have printed and take home as an independent read. The authors set out to objectively “.. verify that the climate establishment’s view really does reflect an unbiased and objective assessment of the current state of climate science.”⁶

In the *Abstract* the authors say⁷:

“A review of the peer-edited literature reveals a systematic tendency of the climate establishment to engage in a variety of stylized rhetorical techniques that seem to oversell what is actually known about climate change while concealing fundamental uncertainties and open questions regarding many of the key processes involved in climate change. Fundamental open questions include not only the size but the direction of feedback effects that are responsible for the bulk of the temperature increase predicted to result from atmospheric greenhouse gas increases: while climate models all presume that such feedback effects are on balance strongly positive, more and more peer-edited scientific papers seem to suggest that feedback effects may be small or even negative.”

The only substantive argument I have heard from Minister Groser (Apata Limited - 25 years celebration – Tauranga, October 2009), yourself (opening Trident Innovation Centre, Katikati – November 2009) and Minister Carter (talking at a Simon Bridges organised breakfast in Tauranga, February 2010) justifying the Government’s actions (to proceed with ETS implementation) is to ensure that New Zealand is not disadvantaged at the trade negotiations table through not ‘playing the game’. Are the people with whom we need free trade agreements ‘playing the game’?

³ (Prison Planet: 10 June 2010) The plan to impose a carbon tax on American citizens may be dead at least for the time being after Republican Senator Lindsey Graham shockingly reversed his views on climate change, telling a press conference that the science behind man-made global warming is in question and those pushing it are alarmists who have oversold the problem. <http://www.prisonplanet.com/carbon-tax-bill-may-be-dead-after-shock-graham-reversal-on-climate-change.html>

⁴ See the submission Professor David Henderson, of the University of Westminster has made to the InterAcademy Council that is reviewing IPCC processes, Professor David Henderson says IPCC is professionally “not up to the mark”, and suggests *improvements in disclosure, inclusiveness and audit*.

http://nzclimatescience.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=639&Itemid=1

⁵ Research Paper No. 10-08 “Global Warming Advocacy Science: a Cross Examination”.

<http://ssrn.com/abstract=1612851>

⁶ Research Paper No. 10-08 “Global Warming Advocacy Science: a Cross Examination”. – Page 5

⁷ Research Paper No. 10-08 “Global Warming Advocacy Science: a Cross Examination”. – Page 1

Minister for Climate Change Issues, Dr Nick Smith has been reported as saying ‘as so much has been invested by companies in preparation for implementation 1 July, it cannot be stopped’. (Wow, Dr Smith, that’s right up there as a justification!)

The current inertia exhibited by Australia and the USA alone give you the excuse to ‘stop for a cup of tea’ without the political risk (and loss) subsequently suffered by the previous ‘tea drinker’.

I appreciate that a significant EU block has an ETS operational, or nearly so. But you will be as aware as I am that the depth and breadth of that system pales into insignificance alongside the scheme your Government is intending to implement for New Zealand. No amount of Wellington ‘spin’ can paint it otherwise.

Prime Minister, despite all your Ministers (and PM Chief Science Adviser’s) rhetoric there is no demonstrable or believable need for your Government to implement the legislation you have in place at this time and you have on a platter, sound reasons to defer.

You are a risk analyser and taker:

- Either A, go ahead 1 July. The risks are the continuing criticism and destabilisation of your Government from within your broader support base, together with the complications and cost of unwinding ETS if, as many outside the climate establishment believe, the science is unsound, and the consequential policy response now being implemented is beyond justification.
- Or B, defer until there is a broader confidence in the IPCC process, guidelines and conclusions and particularly, key trading partner engagement. At that time, the appropriate (and probably incremental, not blunt) policy response will be clear.

Clearly the later is a no cost, no loose option for you, our government and the people of New Zealand at this time.

I implore you - read some independent information (particularly that referenced), assess the risks, form your own opinion and stand up to your advisers. Defer implementing ETS – it’s a ‘no brainer’.

Sir, most importantly, DARE TO BE DIFFERENT!

Respectfully,

John Schnackenberg
Orchardist

Cc: Hon Steven Joyce
Sandra Goudie, MP Coromandel
Simon Bridges, MP Tauranga