



Office of Hon Dr Nick Smith

MP for Nelson

Minister for the Environment

Minister for Climate Change Issues

Minister for ACC

23 DEC 2009

CC 1887

Maureen & Dennis Carter
carts@clear.net.nz

Dear Maureen and Dennis Carter

Thank you for your email of 23 November 2009 regarding climate change.

I note your concern over the emails that you refer to, which (you claim) question the reliability of climate change science and the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). However, I have remained well-read on the science of climate change for nearly 20 years and continue to stay well informed on the different (and indeed, changing) theories. I would caution anyone against jumping on the bandwagon of fringe conspiracy theorists. I do not claim absolute consensus on the science of climate change, nor do I claim that everything about the earth's climatic system is understood. As an engineer, I tend to approach issues from a risk management perspective. In this case, I am absolutely satisfied that there is sufficient risk to justify action.

I am advised that a careful review of the content of the emails shows that they do not undermine the scientific case that climate change is real. They also do not negate the fact that human activities are almost certainly the cause of climate change. This scientific case is supported by multiple, robust lines of evidence, including several that are completely independent of the climate reconstructions debated in the e-mails.

Furthermore, the United Kingdom (UK) Royal Society, in partnership with the UK Met Office and the UK Natural Environment Research Council, recently produced a statement on the science of climate change. The statement says that since the 2007 IPCC Fourth Assessment Report, the evidence for dangerous, long-term and potentially irreversible climate change has strengthened. The scientific evidence that underpins the call for action is very strong. Without co-ordinated international action on greenhouse gas emissions, the impacts on climate and civilisation could be severe.

The government considers a range of factors when determining climate change policy, including scientific, economic, environmental and foreign affairs advice. I firmly believe that international action to reduce emissions is warranted in order to avoid dangerous human-induced climate change. I believe that it is appropriate and timely to introduce a price on emissions through a moderated New Zealand Emissions Trading Scheme. A properly implemented emissions trading scheme, applied as broadly across the economy as practicable, will be the best way to reduce emissions at least cost to the economy and society.

Yours sincerely

Hon Dr Nick Smith
Minister for Climate Change Issues