



05 MAY 2010

Office of Hon Dr Nick Smith

MP for Nelson

Minister for the Environment

Minister for Climate Change Issues

Minister for ACC

CC 2354

Maureen and Dennis Carter
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Dear Maureen and Dennis Carter

Thank you for your email of 3 February 2010 regarding my interview with Mike Hosking, and the credibility of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

It is true that I expect robust advice and evidence-based policy from my advisors. I am keenly aware of the importance of this when it comes to climate change. I have confidence in the New Zealand scientific community, and the climate change advisors that inform the work of the government.

I am advised that the IPCC has issued a retraction of the statement about the Himalayan glaciers, and issued an apology for the error. There have since been further media items on the IPCC's Fourth Assessment Report descriptions of the role of climate change in the observed trends in disaster losses and in the loss of Amazonian rainforest. The IPCC has issued a strong rebuttal of the criticism of the treatment of trends in disaster losses.

While I agree that the errors that were found are concerning, this is merely one of multiple lines of evidence supporting the conclusion that the climate is warming in response to human activities. I am advised that the mistakes in question do not undermine concerns about the impacts or the seriousness of climate change.

Also, the United Kingdom (UK) Royal Society, in partnership with the UK Meteorological (Met) Office and the UK Natural Environment Research Council, recently produced a statement on the science of climate change. It says that since the 2007 IPCC Report, the evidence for dangerous, long-term climate change has strengthened, a copy is available on the Royal Society website at http://royalsociety.org/News_WF.aspx?pageid=4294968632&terms=the+evidence+for+dangerous+%2c+long-term+climate+change+has+strengthened.

The government continues to regard the IPCC as providing the most comprehensive assessment of the science of climate change. The IPCC reviews worldwide evidence from a variety of sources, and the conclusions of the IPCC do not rely solely or even principally on one set of data.

Notwithstanding the position that you take, the reality is that we now live in a world where the climate is changing in response to anthropogenic emissions, and will continue to do so in the future. The government is therefore acting to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to the expected physical impacts of climate change.

My position on the science of climate change is that there is sufficient evidence to cause concern, and that action to reduce emissions is justified. I am also of the view that regular reviews of our response are needed in response to updates on the science, international commitments and the technologies for emissions reduction.

Yours sincerely

Hon Dr Nick Smith
Minister for Climate Change Issues