

Richard Bennett

8th April, 2009

John Hawkins
Committee Secretary
Senate Select Committee on Climate Policy
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir,

I am deeply concerned about global warming and the apparent speed at which climate change appears to be manifesting itself. Recent statements from the International Scientific Congress on Climate Change (Copenhagen, March 2009) have made it abundantly clear that climate scientists believe that predictions for change in the climate contained in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's most recent exhaustive study, "Climate Change 2007" are out of date, and that the need for urgent, responsible, and moral action to reduce carbon emissions is greater than ever before.

In view of the above and in relation to two of the Senate Committee's Terms of Reference;

(c) whether the Government's Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme is environmentally effective, in particular with regard to the adequacy or otherwise of the Government's 2020 and 2050 greenhouse gas emission reduction targets in avoiding dangerous climate change; and,

(d) an appropriate mechanism for determining what a fair and equitable contribution to the global emission reduction effort would be;

I would request that the Committee examine the environmental effectiveness and the fairness of Australia adopting a carbon tax, in particular the carbon tax model suggested by James E. Hansen as the "Carbon Tax & 100% Dividend" to the Committee on Ways and Means, United States House of Representatives on 25th February 2009 - available at http://www.columbia.edu/~jeh1/mailings/2009/20090226_WaysAndMeans.pdf - and also attached to this submission

James E. Hansen is a noted climate scientist and has unequivocally stated on a number of occasions that climate change represents a "peril" to the planet, and to the future of human civilization. Mr Hansen believes that a "Carbon Tax & 100% Dividend" is the most environmentally efficient, equitable and rapid means of reducing the dangerous amounts of carbon pollution entering the earth's atmosphere. As such, I believe the Committee should compare Hansen's Carbon Tax model for its environmental efficiency and equity against the Government's proposed Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS).

Although I have previously supported the Emissions Trading Scheme in submissions to the Government (on the basis of my belief that the Government should have at its disposal sufficient resources to properly attend to notions of efficiency and fairness), I now believe that it is possible the ETS is compromised because of the undue attention it pays to rewarding polluters; rather than paying attention to the urgent task of carbon pollution reduction in the face of the dire warnings climate scientists are issuing about the potential future state of the earth. As such, the ETS put forward by the Government may no longer offer a means by which our society can rapidly and equitably reduce the source of our problem - carbon pollution – and, as such, other models of rapid, efficient and equitable carbon reduction should be given proper consideration.

I have one final comment. Whilst I believe that the work of the Committee is important and that the Government has proposed a flawed model to address the urgent and compounding problem of carbon emissions, I also believe that it is utterly urgent that Government action is forthcoming on this problem. As such, I believe that part of the Committee's task is finding a way forward on reducing carbon emissions. I commend the Committee for finding a way forward that is politically achievable.

I thank you for your time.

Yours faithfully

Richard Bennett