



Rt Hon Peter Lilley MP
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Dear Mr Lilley,

I find myself having to write to you once again because of your continued insistence on making inaccurate and misleading statements in public about climate change. Your article for 'City A.M.', which was published on 30 September 2013, contained a number of errors and misrepresentations.

You describe the Summary for Policymakers of the contribution of working group I to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change as "IPCC bureaucrats". That is simply wrong. The report was not prepared by employees of the IPCC, but instead by 259 independent researchers at universities and institutes from 39 countries around the world.

You draw attention to the slowdown in the rise of global average surface temperature, which has been increasing at a rate of about 0.05°C per decade since 1998, compared with a background warming rate since 1951 of 0.12°C per decade. You claim that the IPCC authors attribute this to an increase in the amount of heat that is being absorbed in the deep oceans, but in fact they also indicated an equal contribution from an increase in volcanic aerosols, which reduce the amount of energy reaching the Earth's surface, and a cyclical reduction in solar irradiance. All of these factors are likely to be temporary.

You also claim that "Almost all recent studies have concluded that the climate is much less sensitive than previous IPCC reports asserted". That is false. The new report is based on all the relevant evidence and literature, including those studies which you incorrectly suggest the authors "largely ignore". Rather than basing their conclusions on a few cherry-picked studies, as you seem to prefer, the authors indicate that the value of equilibrium climate sensitivity is likely to lie in the range between 1.5°C and 4.5°C. This compares with a likely range of 2.0°C to 4.5°C in the Fourth Assessment Report in 2007, and a range of 1.5°C to 4.5°C in the Third Assessment Report in 2001. In terms of transient climate response, which is the most important indicator of near-term climate sensitivity, the new report suggests it is likely to be between 1.0°C and 2.5°C, compared with a range of 1.0°C to 3.0°C in the last report. In neither case do these new results justify the inaction which you recommend, since the report points out that if emissions continue to rise, global warming is likely to exceed 2°C by the end of this century, which all governments have agreed would create dangerous risks.

In addition, you state: "Until scientists agree whether warming will be minimal or massive, we should not drive our fellow citizens into fuel poverty, undermine

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manufacturing and waste taxpayer billions”. This is wrong in two main respects. First, the suggestion that ‘wait and see’ is the best way of managing the risks of climate change is reckless. We know enough about the climate system that delay is dangerous, with greenhouse gases accumulating in the atmosphere and the climate response lagging behind. Unless we are certain that the risks of warming are small, the only prudent option is to mitigate. Second, you imply that the only way to manage the risks is through a series of negative impacts. In fact, investing in a cleaner and more efficient economy is likely to yield benefits for households and businesses alike. The review on fuel poverty by Sir John Hills pointed out that the best way to help poor people who are struggling to pay for gas and electricity is to help them increase the energy efficiency of their homes.

Your article also states: “Belief that the world is doomed, unless we replace coal and gas by renewables costing two or three times as much is already driving up home energy bills and making manufacturing uncompetitive”. It is wrong in a number of respects. First, the costs of many renewable technologies is declining rapidly and approaching the price of fossil fuels, particularly when the huge implicit subsidy for greenhouse gas pollution is removed through a carbon price. As the Committee on Climate Change pointed out in its report earlier this year, even with the current low carbon price in the UK, the levelised costs of onshore wind and biomass conversion are now comparable to those of unabated gas, and the costs of offshore wind should be competitive by 2030, assuming a modest increase in carbon price. Second, as you are no doubt aware, both Ofgem and the Department of Energy and Climate Change have pointed out that the primary driver of the rise in dual fuel bills over the past 8 years has been the UK’s growing dependence on expensive imports of natural gas. Third, robust economic analysis shows that support for renewables adds a relatively small cost to dual fuel bills for the majority of manufacturing businesses, and for which other factors, such as labour costs, remain far more significant.

Finally, I note that you signed the article as Conservative MP for Hitchin and Harpenden. Given your baseless attack in the article on alternatives to fossil fuels, perhaps you should also have informed readers of ‘City A.M.’ that you are Vice-Chairman of Tethys Petroleum.

Given the potential damage to the public debate created by your article, I am copying this letter to the Chair of the House of Commons Select committee on Energy and Climate Change and the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R.E.J. Ward". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Bob Ward
Policy and Communications Director