

Viscount Ridley
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PA

31 January 2018

Dear Viscount Ridley,

I am writing to correct an inaccurate statement that you made in the House of Lords on 30 January.

According to column 1418 of volume 788 of Hansard, you addressed the following statement to Lord Henley, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, during a debate about climate-related financial disclosures:

“Does my noble friend agree that climate-related financial disclosures should take into account the fact that the consensus among climate economists and, indeed, in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, is that the economic impacts will be positive for the next 40 or 50 years?”

This statement was entirely false and indicates that you did not check your facts before speaking. There is no consensus that the economic impacts will be positive for the next 40 or 50 years, and most of the evidence suggests that the aggregate impacts are already negative and will become progressively worse with further rises in global mean surface temperature.

The contribution on impacts, adaptation and vulnerability by working group II of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to the Fifth Assessment Report in 2014 included a chapter on ‘Key Economic Sectors and Services’ (http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/wg2/WGIIAR5-Chap10_FINAL.pdf). Section 10.9.2 on ‘Aggregate impacts’ was based a survey of published academic research and found that 2 of 3 published estimates for warming of 2°C or less calculated overall negative economic impacts. It noted that “losses accelerate with greater warming”. Hence your claim about the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was wrong.

A more up-to-date survey by William Nordhaus and Andrew Moffat, published in July 2017 (<https://cowles.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/pub/d20/d2096.pdf>), found that 5 of 7 estimates were net negative for warming between of 2°C or less. Hence your assertion that there is a consensus among climate economists that the economic impacts will be positive for the next 40 or 50 years is incorrect.

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Chair:
**Professor Lord Stern
of Brentford**

I am somewhat surprised that you did not check your facts more closely, particularly after the embarrassment of making a similar claim in an article for 'The Spectator' in October 2013, only to discover that it was based on a flawed journal article that contained serious errors and had to be amended three times. Although you have never corrected your article, I hope that you will use your next speaking opportunity in the House of Lords to set the record straight about your most recent mistake.

I am copying this letter to Lord Henley.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R.E.J. Ward". The letters are cursive and connected, with a large 'W' at the end.

Bob Ward

Policy and Communications Director

Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment

London School of Economics and Political Science