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From: Kylie Goodwin [SMTP:k.goodwin@student.unsw.edu.au]
Sent: Tuesday, April 24, 2001 2:05 AM
To: jsct@aph.gov.au
Subject: Personal Submission on Kyoto Protocol

Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
Department of House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Dear Sir/Madam

In reading the many submissions and reports provided on your website on the topic of ratification of the Kyoto Protocol it appears that the no action case (headed by the Lavoisier group) is that: we don't have to sign the Kyoto Protocol if we don't want to (granted), that the science may not be correct, we can always wait a couple of decades, and that there will be a cost to Australia, particularly in rural areas, of implementation.

The criticism of the science involved is based on the fact that there are many gaps in our ability to model the very complex earth systems. Perhaps a degree of cynicism after the spectacular failure of Y2K bugs and BSE epidemics to appear gives credence to criticism of the dire warnings, however these events were far less rigorously studied and over a far shorter time frame than global warming has been. Predictions of warming have been adjusted with additional research, however despite decades of research, with vast improvements in modelling technology, and scientific understanding of earth systems, the prediction of warming is yet to reverse. Given that the vast majority of the large modern scientific community predicts an increase in global temperature based on anthropogenic production of gases, surely it is time to accept increased warming as a highly probable event.

One of your submissions refers to the fact that it is a natural cycle for the earth to warm up and cool down. It has been proven that greenhouse gases will contribute to warming, whatever other cycles it is sitting on top of (and predictions of natural cycles suggest we should be heading into a cooling phase). Whether or not this is a natural or man-made cycle, species adaptation to environmental change is a very slow process - many millions of years. The degree of human and other species suffering until this adaptation occurs is likely to be very high. Many of the species and ecosystems facing extinction under a change in climate have not even been recorded, let alone understood. Technology may help humans adapt, but the ability to base innovation on plant and animal kingdom insights will be limited.

In relation to the third criticism (wait 20 years); as many strategists have pointed out, at the time of having the most flexibility of options there is generally the least information and vice versa. We are currently at the point of having increasing proof that global warming is in fact occurring, which suggests that the ability to offset it is decreasing.

Finally there is clearly a cost of implementation to Australia that will, in the first case, fall more heavily on some people than others. Over a hundred year time frame, the cost and consequences of global warming induced climate change will be far larger than those of reducing greenhouse gas emission, particularly given many greenhouse gas sources will greatly decrease by then anyway (at current usage rates). As a country in the medium term we are advantaged by cooperating to reduce warming and helping those affected to adapt to the new approach, rather than doing nothing and wearing the cost.

Failure to minimise output of greenhouse gases from the worlds largest per capita emitter in the face of the anticipated consequences would reflect not only on the morality and short-sighted greed of Australia as a country, but also on the handful of people who have been given the right to choose on our behalf.

Yours Sincerely

Kylie Goodwin

P.S. As an aside, the reference to Australia's military history in the Lavoisier submission is a little confusing. Are the group suggesting that Australia went into war on behalf of our own sovereignty? Or that those who died in the wars were not prepared to suffer for global consequences and ideals?