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From: dieple [SMTP:dieple@tris.net.au]
Sent: Friday, August 25, 2000 6:53 PM
To: jsct@aph.gov.au
Subject: Kyoto Protocol

KYOTO PROTOCOL

To the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties,

Since the beginning of this year I have learnt and become quite interested in the greenhouse phenomenon and how fossil fuels have contributed to global warming. I was concerned when I learnt the possible implications of global warming and how a temperature of just five degrees could melt the polar ice caps and cause global flooding which would lead to many problems.

The Kyoto Protocol, I have come to understand was a meeting of countries to try and reduce greenhouse emissions by 2008. Plainly it hasn't worked. The developing countries were exempt and they'll probably be producing the most greenhouse gases in the future. The US and major western countries except for maybe France don't look like they're going to do anything in a hurry and only small countries seem to have ratified. At this rate it's doubtful if we'll even make a dent in the steadily increasing amounts of greenhouse gases.

I was disappointed that Australia was allowed to increase greenhouse emissions by arguing that we hadn't contributed greatly to the greenhouse effect. It sounded a bit childish, a bit like when our school makes us go out on emu parades and pick up rubbish on the oval and a student whines to a teacher "Why do I have to pick up rubbish? I didn't drop it." If Australia and the rest of the world continue to see the greenhouse effect as "someone else's problem", the problem will get steadily worse until maybe it's even too late to prevent it.

I encourage Australia to ratify the Kyoto Protocol. I'm not saying that if Australia ratifies the Kyoto Protocol it will directly help reduce greenhouse emissions but it's a start and may encourage other countries to ratify or at least consider ratifying the Kyoto Protocol. We probably won't reach our Kyoto target since we are releasing three times the amount of greenhouse gases than the required target, even though the government has already 1 billion on the problem but we can at least try to reduce as much as possible. The obvious way to reduce greenhouse emissions of course is to find a new energy source that doesn't emit harmful gases into the atmosphere.

I have heard the government is considering funding a hydroelectricity scheme in the Kimberleys as it has some of the biggest waves in the world and turning the waves energy into kinetic energy. I think this is quite a good idea but should be scrutinized very carefully. Hydroelectricity could destroy surrounding mangroves, the environment and can disrupt rivers and if hydroelectricity was to power most of Australia, having our shore covered in hydroelectricity stations would be less than scenic. I think solar and wind-power though environmentally friendly, take up too much land, couldn't be relied on to be available constantly and probably would be too expensive. I believe nuclear power is the best option. I know the public regards nuclear power warily. When someone even says the word a lot of people immediately conjure up images of bombs, mushroom clouds and

Hiroshima or the leaky old nuclear power plant in The Simpsons. The government should encourage more research should be done on nuclear energy and how to make it as safe as possible as there doesn't seem to be that much interest in it. I've read that the world doesn't we don't have that large a supply of uranium but it can be converted to plutonium that can last up to hundreds of years. There should also be more research and emphasis on electrical appliance and car efficiency.

I am worried about that the quite a lot general public don't know enough on the greenhouse problem. They know about it in general but tend to think the scientists and politicians can worry about it. My friends would find not knowing what's on TV more worrying than possible global flooding. Other people, I know have the attitude that even if global warming does get bad it won't happen for at least another 50 years, so it's the next generations problem. Others say that global warming is just a story and that there is no problem. Maybe there isn't but the public should be better informed so that they can make a more thoughtful judgement. Australia should ratify and the world politicians need to co-operate more. The politics behind the greenhouse problem looks even more complicated than the problem itself. There should be another meeting and more realistic goals and solutions set. All countries should try to participate and control their greenhouse emissions and maybe then a significant reduction can be made. If things continue to go on like they currently are, things could go from bad to worse and all I can say is if that happens I sure feel sorry for the upcoming generations.

Thanh-Thao Le
Year 8

24/8/2000