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SUBMISSION TO THE SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON CLIMATE POLICY

"And all I am saying is, when I burn my toast I don't blame the bread." – Arj Barker, comedian

Introduction

I first came across global warming in my school science textbook when I was nine in the 1960s. I remember it well because it was something specific amongst the turgid descriptive material so common in junior science texts. I was assured it was very speculative and nothing to worry about. Many years later I was the school science nerd who asked a visiting government environment Minister about what his government was doing about mankind's contribution to the greenhouse effect. This was in the early 1970's and he had heard nothing of it. Whilst at university I warned my environmentalist friends of concerns about man made global warming and the greenhouse effect. They were extremely dismissive because the then global scare they were promoting was the supposed oncoming ice age.

I am now a practising lawyer with an honours science degree majoring in physics, applied maths and with a sub-major in computer science so when my daughter asked me, a couple of years ago, to help her with a global warming assignment, I thought I could easily contribute. To my surprise, within a single evening, I found what I thought was quite a cool theory appeared to be deeply flawed as it related to man's production of carbon dioxide. Within a few more evenings of reviewing the science I realised I had previously been mistaken and that man's production of carbon dioxide had little if any effect on global temperature. I found the UN bureaucrats had been tasked with finding an excuse to create a self serving climate treaty which they had done very well but were reckless at best with scientific truth in order to do so. I now look on with horror as people far less qualified than I are referred to as climate science experts.

Having politicians justifying their actions with emotional appeals about future generations is not acceptable - my promise to my daughter is that with the time and resources available to me I will to the best of my ability determine the truth and act accordingly - hence this submission. She happily accepts that that is the best she can expect of me and that if I am in error it will be up to her generation to sort it out

My submission is simple: I implore this senate select committee to work to the best of its ability to determine and espouse the truth and to act and report accordingly. This includes especially the eschewing of inexact, misleading and emotional terminology which serves to hide the facts rather than set them out clearly. In recent times this has become more and more the language of climate policy.

Submission Explanation

Similarly to the witch hunting scam of the middle ages where much of society's supposedly most powerful, best and brightest encouraged, supported or merely stood by whilst innocents were branded as witches and burnt at the stake or treated to other harsh and degrading

punishment, today many of society's most powerful, best and brightest are engaged in demonising the miracle chemical element that is responsible for all life on this planet: Carbon. They claim the planet is suffering from carbon pollution.

Initially the concern was expressed precisely and accurately: that increasing levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere which were believed to be man-made were causing global warming which, on conservative estimates, would lead to several degrees average temperature increase over the ensuing hundred years or so. The concern was based on the fact that carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas albeit a minor one. There are strong scientific grounds for doubting this thesis and nature has helped to confirm those doubts as over the last 10 years the planet's average temperature has levelled and been falling whilst carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere have gone up steadily and substantially.

In normal circumstances this would be enough to allay any concerns and cause scientists to look for another explanation for their observations as happened to the ice age scare of the 1970's. Unfortunately there is a loosely knit, peer reviewing collective of climate modellers around the world who have a very expensive computer "habit" that needs constant feeding in the form of funds as well as vested interests who have committed themselves to this cause. In the virtual worlds of computer modellers they have built their models on the assumption that increasing carbon dioxide levels causes major climate change and they take the output of these models as proof of the assumption that they made in building them. Something of a circular argument if ever I saw one ... Amongst those bodies with costly computers to maintain are the CSIRO and/or the Bureau of Meteorology.

Since the facts won't fit the cause, the facts are being ignored and the language around the cause is being changed in a way that makes it almost unintelligible in terms of science or the precision that a lawyer might seek. It is being "morphed" into a new religion. "Anthropogenic Global Warming" became "Global Warming" and when it became clear that the globe has been and is cooling rather than warming, it became merely, "Climate Change". Ever since a collection of orbiting rocks around the sun coalesced into planet Earth about 4.5 billion years ago, planet Earth has been subject to constant climate change. Climate change is something we have always lived with, civilisations have been supported by and destroyed by it and climate change will always be with us. The planet's temperature has been many degrees higher than today and lower. At times carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere have been over 10 times their present levels. Since, over the last 10 years, carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere do not appear to have increased the planet's average temperature the identity of the "demon" is being morphed into "carbon". References to carbon may be to the element itself or any of its thousands of compounds. The identity of the "demon" is being made vague and relatively unintelligible.

Matters are made worse by the constant propaganda, the falsity of which any high school science student should be able to recognize. Government propaganda shows us carbon dioxide balloons. The balloons are black to demonise the gas that is supposed to be inside because the gas itself is both colourless and odourless. Unfortunately the propagandists involved were sufficiently ignorant of science to not know that carbon dioxide is heavier than air and that therefore the balloons should fall to the ground and not rise up to the ceiling. Whenever this matter is mentioned in the media and the media wants to illustrate the story pictorially we are treated to pictures of industrial chimneys belching out light grey material into the sky. Yet the media does not seem to understand that carbon dioxide is both colourless and odourless and therefore cannot be the subject of a normal photograph in its gaseous form. The material seen pouring out of the smokestacks is probably composed of water vapour (a much more effective greenhouse gas), partially consumed hydrocarbons and other inert material which if released in the atmosphere in sufficient quantities would actually cause and have been observed to cause cooling (witness the effect of major volcanic eruptions such as Mount Pinatubo in the early 1990's.)

It is my submission that the Senate, being a house of review, needs to address the issues raised on an objective factual basis. It must remove all untruthful or misleading language so that in handling the issues raised by its enquiry into climate policy its report will be based on accurate factual material and not material that is composed of emotive and inaccurate spin so that its report will be intelligible, will withstand the test of time and reflect on the Senate and its committees with credit.

Below I illustrate some of the issues set out above in a more specific form by reference to the terminology used in the reference provided to the committee:

“The choice of emissions trading as the central policy to reduce Australia's *carbon pollution*, taking into account the need to: (i) reduce *carbon pollution* at the lowest economic cost ... (iii) Contribute to a global solution to *climate change* and Related Matter” [emphasis added]

Carbon is defined in The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary as, "One of the non-metallic elements, occurring uncombined in three allotropic forms - two crystalline (diamond and graphite) and one amorphous (charcoal), and in combination in carbonic acid gas, and all organic compounds (hence called 'the carbon compounds') ... ". Carbon is the sixth element in the periodic table and it and its thousands of compounds form the basis of all life on this planet. In fact all living organisms on this planet are carbon-based life forms. For us, life does not exist without carbon.

Neither diamonds nor graphite can be described as pollutants but as useful materials. Charcoal when in the form of soot released from chimneys is a pollutant but as an aerosol material it is more likely to cause global cooling than heating. It is already dealt with adequately through State government environmental regulation and is readily trapped through the use of electrostatic precipitators. Further regulation particularly through an emissions trading scheme would duplicate existing regulation and would have a very high economic cost for little if any benefit.

If the reference to "carbon" means compounds containing carbon then every form of life on this planet must be regarded as pollution.

If the reference to "carbon" is meant to be to carbon dioxide or greenhouse gases then that should be stated specifically. Furthermore carbon dioxide and water are the two chemical compounds upon which all life on this planet is built. If carbon dioxide levels are reduced too low the growth of the planet's flora will be reduced to nominal levels or stopped and food supplies will become rapidly exhausted. When levels were much higher in the past the planet was much greener and forests grew to such an extent that most of the planet's coal supplies were generated from the forests of that period.

If the concern is about increased levels of carbon dioxide the reference should say so.

The global solution to "climate change" is to adapt and any attempts to control climate are beyond our current levels of scientific and technical skills.

If the reference to climate change is actually meant to refer to changes induced by increased levels of carbon dioxide then the Senate committee's report should state that specifically if that is the interpretation of the reference they intend to take.

In other words if they are to use terminology in a way that is different from its normal English or technical meaning then I urge the committee to define those terms in its report. In particular the terms, "carbon", "carbon pollution" and "climate change" will be in clear need of

clarification of how they are being used. Such definitions will be essential in order to determine whether a “carbon” trading scheme will have an impact on “carbon pollution” and whether in turn it will have an impact on “climate change”.

Conclusion

In short, if the Senate is going to enquire into policies relating to climate then it should do so without resorting to terminology that obfuscates and distorts if not misstates the issues and buries them in meaningless, quasi religious spin. In years to come the Senate will be judged less upon the choices it makes honestly and more upon whether it appears to have deliberately and knowingly tried to hide or avoid any flaws in the conclusions it reaches by allowing terminological inexactitude into its report or deliberations.

I urge the Senate committee to clear out the detritus of spin doctored and misleading terminology so as to produce a clear and unambiguous report on a very important matter.

Dated: 7th April 2009

John Piers Warner