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10 November 2010

Dear REDACTED REDACTED,

Thank you for your email dated 17 June to the Secretary of State about climate change. I have been asked to reply and I apologise for the long delay in doing so. The Department has been receiving an unprecedented volume of correspondence in recent months and has only been able to respond to your email today.

In your email, you question the reality of the widespread scientific consensus on man-made climate change. The Government accepts that there are some scientists who are sceptical of man-made climate change, but that is always the nature of scientific debate. The IPCC is a scientific body whose climate change assessments are informed by the full range of available scientific evidence as is required by the IPCC's governing principles (see [http://www.ipcc.ch/organization/organization\\_procedures.htm](http://www.ipcc.ch/organization/organization_procedures.htm)).

There is no doubt, however, that the vast majority of climate scientists now accept that climate change is happening and that most of the warming over recent decades is very likely caused by increased greenhouse gases from human activity. This view is supported by direct empirical evidence as well as the detection of the "signal" of human influence on climate in a number of changes observed over the past few decades. An excellent summary can be found at the website of the Government's Chief Scientist at <http://www.bis.gov.uk/go-science/climatescience/causes>. I would also point out that all the leading scientific institutions and national scientific academies agree that emissions of greenhouse gases from human activity are changing the global climate.

Further, there is also widespread scientific agreement that the recent perceived controversies surrounding the IPCC assessment process and the leaked 'Climategate' emails do not affect the key conclusions of the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report concerning potentially dangerous anthropogenic (i.e. human-caused) interference with the Earth's climate. The UK Government agrees with this view.

Lord Stern, in his respected study of the economic impacts of climate change, has shown<sup>1</sup> that the cost to the global economy of climate change mitigation would amount to a manageable 1 to 2% of global GDP (Gross Domestic Product) by 2050, provided the necessary action is taken promptly. However, according to the Stern Review, delaying action will likely increase the economic cost, and the consequences to the

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<sup>1</sup> Lord Stern, 2006, 'The Stern Review of the Economics of Climate Change', Cambridge University Press.

global economy of not taking action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions over the coming decades could be severe.

The Government emphasises the importance of the move to a low-carbon economy as a real opportunity to drive forward innovation, job creation and competitiveness. A shift to low carbon, apart from reducing the risk of substantial climate change, can reduce our dependency on finite fossil fuels, taking us towards a cleaner, quieter, more energy secure and fairer society.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

REDACTED REDACTED  
**DECC Correspondence Unit**