

Centre for  
Climate Change  
Economics and Policy



Grantham Research Institute on  
Climate Change and  
the Environment

# Supplementary submission to inquiry on 'IPCC 5<sup>th</sup> Assessment Review' by the House of Commons Select Committee on Energy and Climate Change

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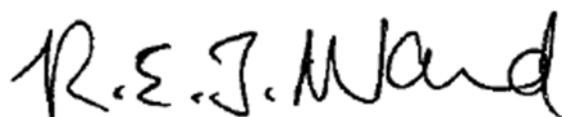
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Authors' signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R.E.J. Ward". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized, with the first letters being larger and more prominent.

Bob Ward

## **Introduction**

The Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment (<http://www.lse.ac.uk/grantham>) and the Centre for Climate Change Economics and Policy (<http://www.cccep.ac.uk>) welcome the opportunity to respond to this call for evidence by the Energy and Climate Change Committee on the “IPCC 5<sup>th</sup> Assessment Review”.

This is a supplementary submission addressing issues that were raised during the Committee’s oral evidence session on 28 January 2014.

## **Commentary on oral evidence**

1. On 28 January 2014, the Committee held an oral evidence session with three witnesses: Donna Laframboise, Nicholas Lewis and Professor Richard Lindzen. Each witness made a number of inaccurate and misleading statements during their testimony which were not challenged by members of the Committee. I wish to provide some examples rather than a comprehensive list of the statements and to urge the Committee’s members to exercise extreme caution in considering the evidence.

2. Donna Laframboise was asked by Mr Stringer why she thought the organisation should be abolished. Her reply was extremely misleading: “When the IAC [InterAcademy Council] reported in 2010, it said that there were significant shortcomings in every major step of the IPCC process. That is not a mild criticism. That suggests that there are serious reasons to be very careful about the conclusions of the IPCC process.” In fact, the IAC was commissioned by the IPCC to conduct a review and to make recommendations about how its processes and procedures could be strengthened in order to ensure the ongoing quality of its reports. Rather than delivering the scathing critique that Ms Laframboise suggested, the IAC’s report concluded that “the IPCC assessment process has been successful overall and has served society well”, while also recommending some fundamental changes to ensure its future success.

3. Nic Lewis was questioned by Mr Lilley about the slowdown in the rate of increase of global average surface temperature over the past 15 years. Mr Lilley asked Mr Lewis to confirm that the natural factors that are thought to have largely counteracted the underlying warming effect of rising greenhouse gas levels since 1998 could also have amplified the global temperature increase prior to that period, adding “does the IPCC report make that point?” Mr Lewis replied: “It certainly could have been affected in the opposite direction over the previous 20 to 25 years since the warming started in the late 70s. I don’t think the IPCC report brings that out. In fact, I think, if anything, it suggests that that’s not the case.” Mr Lewis’s statement was simply untrue. Chapter 10 of working group I’s report explicitly considers the evidence for such a claim (Bindoff *et al.*, 2013). It notes on page 885 that “several studies claim a role for internal variability associated with the AMO [Atlantic

Multidecadal Oscillation] in driving enhanced warming in the 1980s and 1990s as well as the recent slow down in warming, while attributing long-term warming to anthropogenically forced variations either by analysing time series of GMST [global mean surface temperature], forcings and indices of the AMO or by analysing both spatial and temporal patterns of temperature.” However, the report points out: “There is agreement among studies that the contribution of the AMO to global warming since 1951 is very small (considerably less than 0.1°C) and given that observed warming since 1951 is very large compared to climate model estimates of internal variability, which are assessed to be adequate at global scale, we conclude that it is virtually certain that internal variability alone cannot account for the observed global warming since 1951.”

4. The most inaccurate and misleading comments were made by Professor Richard Lindzen, so I provide two examples from his testimony to the Committee.

5. Professor Lindzen was asked by Mr Stringer if the IPCC report had ignored research about the potential contributions to climate change of solar activity, as well as cosmic rays from outer space which might have reduced the amount of clouds blocking out the Sun’s rays. Professor Lindzen replied: “The IPCC not only didn’t include it, but it may not even have any way of including it at the moment.” This is not true. The role of energy from the Sun is examined in detail in the IPCC report, and the Summary for Policymakers (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2013) indicates from the evidence that it “made only a small contribution to the net radiative forcing throughout the last century”. The Summary also concludes: “No robust association between changes in cosmic rays and cloudiness has been identified.”

6. Professor Lindzen also gave a false impression of a recent book, ‘Climate Casino’, by Professor William Nordhaus (2013), an economist at Yale University. Professor Lindzen told the Committee: “An economist at Yale, Bill Nordhaus, has a book on climate policy and if you look carefully at that book, he estimates the cost-benefit and so on of various policies and it’s clear that there is virtually no policy that beats doing nothing for 50 years.” In fact, Professor Nordhaus’s book makes no such claim. In the final chapter, Professor Nordhaus asks what an impartial jury would conclude from the available evidence. He states: “A fair verdict would find that there is clear and convincing evidence that the planet is warming; that unless strong steps are taken, the earth will experience a warming greater than it has seen for more than half a million years; that the consequences of the changes will be costly for human societies and grave for many unmanaged earth systems; and that the balance of risks indicates that immediate action should be taken to slow and eventually halt emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases. These basic findings must be qualified and constantly updated because of the uncertainties involved at all stages of the link from economic growth through emissions and climate change to impacts and policies. But the basic findings

have stood the test of time, rebuttal, and multiple assessments by hundreds of natural and social scientists. There are no grounds for objective parties simply to ignore the basic results, to call them a hoax, or to argue that we need another half century before we act.”

7. These are just examples of the numerous inaccurate and misleading statements which the three witnesses made during their evidence to the Committee on 28 January. I urge all of the Committee members to take great care when considering the veracity of the testimonies, and to be fully aware of the shortcomings of the oral evidence that was delivered.

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