



Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency
Minister for Industry and Innovation

C12/3190

The Hon Greg Hunt MP
Shadow Minister for Climate Action,
Environment and Heritage
PO Box 274
HASTINGS VIC 3915

Dear Mr Hunt 

Thank you for your personal representation of 5 July 2012 to the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, the Hon Tony Burke MP, referring a personal representation from Mr Scott Morrison MP, on behalf of Mr Laurie Cummings, concerning the global hydrological cycle and climate change. Your letter has been forwarded to me for reply as I have portfolio responsibility for this matter.

The science of climate change is robust. I have previously responded to Mr Morrison addressing Mr Cumming's concerns on the issue of the global hydrological cycle and the affect of the water vapour feedback on global temperatures. The following additional information has been prepared by the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency.

- Peer review research confirms that the water vapour feedback is positive, and hence additional water vapour leads to further warming over all. These studies have taken into account the effect of evaporation in this process.
- Estimates of long-term ocean surface salinity suggest that the global water cycle (which is comprised of all rainfall and evaporation fluxes) has intensified over the 1950-2000 period by 4 per cent (Durack et al 2012). This is around twice the rate that global climate models have previously estimated. It is possible that a change of up to 20 per cent could occur in response to a 2 to 3 degrees Celsius warmer world.
- As previously outlined to Mr Cummings, the Australian Government's climate change policies are based on peer reviewed scientific research. The peer review process ensures that the scientific information is critically assessed by experts in the field and guarantees that the scientific information used by the Government is of the highest standard.
- If Mr Cummings wishes to challenge the wealth of peer reviewed scientific research on the global hydrological cycle and the positive water vapor feedback, it is advised that he submit his theories to a peer reviewed journal where they will be assessed by experts in the field to ensure their validity and accuracy.

Thank you for bringing Mr Cumming's concerns to my attention.

Yours sincerely


GREG COMBET