SUBMISSION ON:
NEW ZEALAND’S CLIMATE CHANGE TARGET DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

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I would like to be heard in support of this submission if possible.

I would like to start with the following extract from pg.3:

“Foreword

Climate change is a truly global problem. It affects all regions, people and economies across the world.”

Unfortunately this first sentence sets the theme for the whole document and is incorrect. There is absolutely no evidence that climate change is a problem, let alone a global one. As a geologist I look at the long term evidence and can see that a changing climate is a natural process that has been going on since the Earth formed…the climate has always changed and always will. There is absolutely no evidence that what is occurring today is anything other than natural climate change.

THE GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The graph below shows that the Earth has been cooling over the last 65,000,000 years due to natural and still largely poorly understood causes. We are actually living in an unnaturally cool period in the Earth’s recent history.
The next graph shows that this cooling trend has continued for the last 5 million years as well:

About 1 million years ago the 41,000 year cycle of hot and cold periods changed to a 100,000 year pattern of more extreme cycles for reasons that are poorly understood but probably related to Milankovich cycles of obliquity and eccentricity in our orbit around the Sun.

As illustrated below evidence from Antarctic ice cores give us a record of CO2 and temperature over the last 420,000 years and show that there are natural cycles of ice ages lasting about 100,000 years interspersed with warmer interglacial periods lasting about 10,000 years and that we are currently in one of these short naturally warmer periods.
Detailed examination of these records shows that temperature changes most commonly precede CO2 changes (by about 800 years), not the reverse as we are continuously being told by the media. This makes perfect sense as most CO2 is in the oceans, not the atmosphere, so as the oceans warm (for whatever reason) CO2 will come out of solution and end up in the atmosphere.

It seems very likely that the Earth will go into another ice age before too long. It is worth noting that each ice age seems to be getting longer and cooler which is a worrying trend for mankind. If global warming is occurring maybe this is actually a good thing, not a problem as the initial quote suggests. I went to university in Montreal, Canada which was under 2km of ice just 10,000 years ago and I’m sure that another ice age would be infinitely worse than any amount of warming.

The graph below, from Greenland ice core data, covers the last 11,000 years and shows both temperature (blue trace) and CO2 levels (red trace). It starts on the left with the earth warming up significantly at the end of the last ice age, remaining relatively stable (with fluctuations) until about 3300 years ago and then starting to cool again. This is more than a little worrying given the past record and considering that we may actually be somewhat overdue for the next ice age. It can be seen that rather than being in a period of worrying warmth we are actually living in a period of declining temperatures (with fluctuations).

It is also worth noting that CO2 levels have been steadily rising for the last 6500 years (red trace) but this has had no obvious effect on our climate at all. This trend has continued right up to the present day. Starting at about 1850 the earth started coming out of the Little Ice Age and temperatures and sea levels started to rise gently and many glaciers started to retreat. However there was no significant increase in CO2 until the end of WWII when Germany and Japan started to reindustrialise and consume increasing amounts of fossil fuels. This increase in CO2 had no effect on global temperatures which continued to rise at the same gentle rate as before.
The graph does not show the most recent changes as ice from this period was not sampled in the cores and CO2 is now at about 400ppm. However this increase has had virtually no effect on temperatures and indeed satellite data as shown below clearly illustrates that there has been no statistically significant global warming for the last 15-18 years and this significant fact was acknowledged both by the IPCC’s Rajenda Pachauri and UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon. The following quote from page 5 on Human Impact on the Climate is clearly ridiculous:

“If greenhouse gas emissions continue to increase at the current rate for a few more decades, we are likely to see average global temperatures warm by more than 4°C by 2100.”

Yet Box 1 on the same page states:

“New Zealand has already warmed by about 0.9°C since 1900.”
Surely if NZ has only warmed by less than 1°C in 115 years it is inconceivable that the Earth will suddenly start to warm and increase by 4°C in the next 85 years. The minor global warming in the 1980’s and 1990’s was merely a pause in long-term global cooling.

Despite this obvious and highly significant disconnect between CO2 levels and temperatures the UN IPCC has continued to issue scary predictions about future temperatures. The graph below shows the results of 73 computer models and the IPCC confidence levels in the results vs. the actual real world temperature as measured by satellites and radiosonde balloons (shown by the green circles and blue squares). Clearly the IPCC models which are largely based on rising CO2 levels have no predictive power at all and should be ignored.
NZ OPTIONS

Given that the long term trends are set by natural process rather than by humans we should not worry and waste money and resources trying to fix a non-problem. CO2 levels will continue to rise naturally and this is not a bad thing. CO2 is an important plant food and indeed we put up to 1000ppm CO2 into greenhouses to increase crop production. Satellite observations show that globally the Earth is greening due to increasing CO2 and surely this is a good thing. More plants equals more food for our increasing global population. If the world does become slightly warmer why is this a bad thing? What is the ideal temperature and CO2 level we are trying to achieve…when were we in this state of Nirvana? Was it at the end of the Little Ice Age in 1850, 1900, 1950, the year Kyoto was signed? When? We need to know this before we try and set a target. What temperature do we want? 1°C less than present; 5°C less than present? What is the goal? Why was this temperature or CO2 level ideal? Who decides this? Is it the UN, IPCC, Greenpeace, WWF, who?

NZ should stand up for what is right and sensible, not what is politically correct. Both Canada and Australia have had the courage to break away from this nonsense. Are we afraid that taking a brave stand will hurt our tourism or trade? There is absolutely no sign that this has happened to Canada or Australia. Surely we as a nation pride ourselves in being independent and doing the right thing, not just following the mob.
Page 8 states that:

“Our population has grown by 31 per cent since 1990…”

Yet page 10 states that:

“Since 1990, New Zealand’s total greenhouse gas emissions have grown by about 21 per cent”

Clearly if our greenhouse gas levels are growing at only about 2/3 the level of our population increase surely we are doing just fine. No change is required!

The right thing for NZ is to actually do nothing at Paris. We do not need to attend or make any further commitments to cut CO2. We have done enough.

If it is still felt politically that we must do something, let’s do something different and useful that will actually help someone. Why not direct our energies to encouraging tree planting in the third world…this will absorb CO2 but more importantly give them much needed firewood. We could increase aid for geothermal projects in the third world or for drilling water wells in Africa to give them clean potable water. Money to fund this should be diverted from ridiculous programmes to try and reduce methane emissions from our livestock. By diverting these funds to the third world we would actually be saving and improving lives. Surely by standing up and taking a practical stance like this we would gain the notice of the world and be respected for doing something that is actually useful and will really make a difference to mankind today and not just be symbolic nonsense.

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