



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



THE SENATE

PROOF

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE:
TAKE NOTE OF ANSWERS**

Climate Change

SPEECH

Thursday, 19 November 2009

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

SPEECH

Date Thursday, 19 November 2009
Page 59
Questioner
Speaker Eggleston, Sen Alan

Source Senate
Proof Yes
Responder
Question No.

Senator EGGLESTON (Western Australia) (3.12 pm)—What a pivotal moment today is. To think that the Canadians are deferring the introduction or discussion of their cap-and-trade ETS scheme until after the Copenhagen conference. That shows, I must say, a high degree of responsibility and eminent common sense by the Canadian government. If only the Rudd-Wong government could do the same sort of thing in Australia so that we could be sure that whatever is done in Australia is appropriate to the needs of this country. Not only is the Canadian government deferring their scheme; I am told that the leadership of the United States Senate is discussing deferring the Waxman-Markey bill, which is the bill that would introduce a cap-and-trade emissions trading scheme in the United States. They are proposing to defer it until after the Copenhagen conference for the very good reason that they, like the Canadians, do not want to be left out on a limb, as would happen to Australia were this government to continue blindly proceeding down the road of introducing this lunatic scheme.

This scheme is going to wreck the Australian economy, cause massive job losses and produce, in fact, almost no reduction in carbon in this country. This scheme, the CPRS, is an absolute fraud. It does not reduce carbon emissions. What happens if you have an emissions intensive industry like a cement factory or something is that, rather than reducing emissions, you go and buy a rainforest in Indonesia or some Third World country and you trade off the emissions from your plant against the carbon capture by that rainforest in another country. It is a total fraud. The Australian people are not stupid. They can see through this sort of nonsense—and they will not just see through it but also feel the pain of it, because unfortunately they are going to have to bear the cost of the tax burden of the CPRS.

This is supposed to be a trading scheme, but unfortunately our major regional trading partners—China, Japan, South Korea and India, who are our top four trading partners—have no intention of introducing an emissions trading scheme. That means, rather than being able to trade off the carbon credit between countries, the Australian taxpayer, if this scheme is introduced, would have to carry the whole burden of what is estimated to be somewhere between \$50 billion a year and \$87 billion a year in extra taxes. That pain will cause them very much to question the wisdom of

the Rudd government in going ahead with this crazy proposal of the CPRS. If we are going to do anything, in my view, we should propose to have a carbon tax, which could be tailored to our needs. It would be easy to administer, it would not involve setting up the huge bureaucracy that the CPRS requires and it would be a great step forward compared to the CPRS.

We just heard a little bit from the last speaker questioning the science of climate change and expressing fear about rising sea levels and the impact of climate change on Australian society. Let's face it—that is a huge debate. Climate change has been going on for thousands of millions of years. It is part of the natural cyclical history of the world's atmosphere. I have a feeling that, somehow or other, this whole subject of the greenhouse effect is going to turn out to be another Y2K bug—an enormous fraud. Nothing is going to happen. I read a book recently by Professor Paltridge, who used to be the chief climate scientist of the CSIRO, called *The Climate Caper*. He says in that book that, in his opinion, there will be as much climate change in the next 50 years as there has been in the last—in other words, very little at all. I do not think we have a lot to worry about.