

GILES CHICHESTER MEP

for South West England and Gibraltar

PRESS LETTER

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To the Editor, Letters

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Dear Editor

My discussions with constituents in the South West reveal a wide divergence of views on the issue of climate change. Many are not convinced about global warming and argue that warnings of the melting of Polar ice packs and future rises in sea levels are not borne out by the scientific evidence. Others point to our wet, humid summers and local flooding as a foretaste of the increasing effects of climate change. The majority are, like me, confused by messages of doom from experts who issue statements based upon the latest climate predictions of their computer programmes. These are always prefaced by words such as should, could or may, thus emphasising by the vagueness of the language the inadequate foundations of their research.

In December there will be an important international meeting in Copenhagen to thrash out a global climate change policy. I am, however concerned to learn that many eminent scientists who are unconvinced by much of the research forecasting global warming have not been invited to participate in this debate. This is indeed worrying, for the findings of this Copenhagen Conference will have a considerable effect on future social and economic policies of governments and, in particular, for those of developing nations. Rather than attempt to suppress the research of those who reject global warming, it should be seriously considered in an open debate to achieve a correct and practical resolution of the issues. People need to be reassured that if the climate change crisis is real then the sacrifice which may be demanded of us will not be simply another example of government spin to make us accept higher taxes.

Although I may appear somewhat sceptical about global warming, I believe we must be realistic about one of the important issues which will form part of the Copenhagen debate. There is need to reduce our dependency on fossil fuels which contributes to pollution levels that are detrimental to the environment and our health. Furthermore, we cannot take for granted that our future energy needs will be provided by fossil fuels because their supply is finite and, as the recent Ukraine crisis shows, can be easily disrupted by political events. We must make greater efforts to improve our energy efficiency, diversify our energy sources and develop new technologies to ensure a clean, secure and sustainable future energy supply.



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