

**Speech to the Senate**  
**Carbon Farming Initiative Bill**  
**2nd Reading**

**Parliament House, Canberra**  
**31 October, 2014**

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**Senator for South Australia**

Thank you Mr President.

This year the world will enjoy its greatest grain crop on record. Let me say that again. This year the world will enjoy its greatest grain crop on record. After the world food security crisis of 2007 which saw civil unrest in some countries, it is fantastic to see that in just 7 years we are producing record amounts of food for a growing world population. The US Department of Agriculture recently raised global crop predictions for corn, soy and wheat. Yet the World Bank indicates that over the last 10 reporting years, the percentage of agricultural land worldwide has not changed.

So what is driving this world food production boom?

Mr President, plants are thriving on the extra carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. A recent study showed that climate modellers over-estimated the amount of carbon dioxide that would remain in the atmosphere. Lo and behold, they have now discovered that plants are soaking up the additional carbon dioxide and growing more vigorously. Plants and trees and crops will absorb 130 billion tonnes more carbon dioxide this century than expected. It's called the 'carbon dioxide fertilisation effect'. This is not just a benefit to food crops- it is a boon to native vegetation, from the ancient forests to desert scrub that environmental activists have been trying to preserve for decades. Then there is the latest science on how the oceans are absorbing carbon dioxide with plankton growing faster than previously thought.

So why is this Government spending billions of dollars to reduce this airborne saviour of vegetation and food crops?

I am stunned by the number of politicians who are either ignorant or wilfully misleading the public on this topic. A whole political industry has developed around new arcane language to describe what we have known for centuries about producing food and improving our environment. A whole false economy has developed, fuelled by taxpayer funding through an Emissions Reduction Fund, An Emissions Trading Scheme, Renewable Energy Targets, The Renewable Energy Agency, The Climate Change Authority, Climate Change Departments and more. This Bill seeks to subsidise activities because they have so-called 'co-benefits' – well, if there are benefits in activities that also arguably help the environment, people should be doing them anyway without massive taxpayer subsidies - just as landfill operators have been doing – and I commend them for doing so over the years - in capturing gas emissions from landfills, until the rent seeking, carpet-bagging,

bootlegging crony capitalists jumped on the climate change bandwagon to suck money from the taxpayer.

With the carbon tax, families felt and could clearly see for the first time the direct impact on their personal budgets from spending money to reduce carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. This Emissions Reduction Fund is no different, but by sleight of hand people will be less able to see how their taxes will need to stay higher than they should be in order to pay for this scheme.

Taking money from low-income families and spending it on dodgy activities with a spurious scientific basis punishes the poor, rewards the rent-seekers and churns money in taxes, grants and rebates.

Mr President, Australia can not afford this Emissions Reduction Fund during what the Government has told us is a budget emergency.

While many families struggle with the cost of living, while mums and dads struggle to find jobs to make ends meet, the Government spends their money appeasing high-income elites enthralled by this latest cause and championed by celebrities, self-promoting 'experts' and certain elements of the media.

Rent-seekers like wind tower companies and solar panel manufacturers get paid handsomely and advocates in the climate change industry are living very nicely off the system flying around in private jets irrespective of whether these schemes improve the environment or human living conditions.

\$2.5bn of taxpayers money spent on reducing carbon dioxide to stop so-called global warming while Arctic and Antarctic sea ice is growing. Growing, not shrinking. It's bizarre!

I am dismayed that honest, intelligent people in this place can sit mute and watch this blatant trashing of both science and economics.

Mr President, I have a science background but any high school student can tell you that carbon dioxide is not a pollutant. CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere is not pollution!

Now I know there are colleagues in this chamber who agree with me on all this but feel they must toe a party line but I for one am not so constrained and perhaps I speak for them also in saying that I will not sit mute and support this nonsense.

Minister Cormann told this place just two days ago, and I quote:

*"Coal is good. Coal is good. It is at the heart of our economic prosperity here in Australia and around the world. It has helped lift living standards for people right across the world. It will continue to help lift living standards around the world."*

If that is so, if colleagues believe in all good conscience that this Bill is wrong, then I urge them to speak up – don't be scientific girly men!

I oppose the Bill.