

Rt Hon Chris Huhne MP
Department of Energy and Climate Change
3 Whitehall Place
London
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On behalf of the Country Land and Business Association, I write to offer you strong encouragement for the process of negotiating targets for reductions in Greenhouse Gas emissions following the agreement in Durban on 11 December.

We support the view of the British government and the EU that a detailed timetable for binding cuts to stabilise atmospheric carbon levels by 2050 should be agreed, and that as part of this process we must persuade China and India to accept appropriate targets. We also believe that a commitment by the EU to enter into a second commitment period conditional on such a timetable being agreed and implemented represents a positive way forward. It will only be possible to stabilise greenhouse gases in the atmosphere by 2050 so as to limit global mean temperature rise to +2°C if a robust target for the 2020s is adopted and implemented and we would support a cut of 30 percent on 1990 levels by 2020, with the further development and promotion of renewable energy.

In 2006, in conjunction with the European Landowners Organisation and the University of East Anglia, we published a study of European estates and climate change entitled *Climate Change and the European Countryside*. For fourteen estates, adequate records were available to compare climate before and after 1990, and thirteen of these showed decadal rates of increase in average annual temperature of from 0.31°C to 0.73°C, the highest increases occurring in central Europe, South-eastern England and Finland. These rates are alarming, and underline the point that even if global warming were contained to 2°C, most of Europe would experience double that rate. The fact that eleven of the hottest years in the instrumental record have occurred since 1998, and that mean global temperature in 2010 equalled that of 1998 as the hottest year underscores our concerns.

This has serious implications for not only for cropping, forestry, water resources and erosion, but also for biodiversity, and through mean sea-level rise for coastal zones. In all these ways, our members are particularly vulnerable to climate change, and we believe it likely that any increase in the frequency of extreme events will have an impact disproportionate to changes in the mean. Land management has a central role to play in adaptation for food and environmental security.

I would also draw your attention to the role that landowners can play in climate change mitigation, through carbon sequestration and through production of renewables in the energy and construction sectors. This potential is, however, unlikely to be fulfilled without a higher carbon price.

Land use is fundamental to an effective climate policy. We therefore underline the importance of completion of funding and verification arrangements for the REDD+

programme in developing countries. We also draw your attention to the decision by Australia to include new sequestration in timber and grassland in its carbon trading programme and we strongly encourage the inclusion of net new carbon sequestration within ETS.

Harry Cotterell
President

cc: Rt Hon Caroline Spelman MP, Secretary of State for Defra