



# NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

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Dr. Richard S. Lindzen  
MIT  
Dept. of Earth, Atmosphere, & Planetary Sciences  
77 Massachusetts Avenue  
54-1720  
Cambridge, MA 02139

Title: On the observational determination of climate sensitivity and its implications

Ms. No.: 2010-15738

Dear Dr. Lindzen,

I am contacting you regarding the manuscript you recently contributed to PNAS. During the normal course of evaluation by the Editorial Board, concerns were raised about the appropriateness of the referees who evaluated the work. A member of the Board noted:

This is a paper about a very important subject (potentially negative atmospheric feedback to increased SST). If the analysis done by the authors prove to be correct, major scientific and even political implications can be foreseen. This, of course, is a strong argument in favor of the publication of the manuscript, as PNAS clearly aims at contributions breaking new ground.

On the other hand, it is precisely the high potential relevance of the issues addressed in the manuscript that requires the most objective and informed peer review conceivable. The article submitted by Lindzen and Choi is a response to strong (published) criticism of a previous paper by the authors. Not being a true specialist in the pertinent field, I cannot provide a solid judgment whether Lindzen and Choi have overcome that criticism. But it is good scientific practice to involve either some of those who have raised the counter-arguments (and may be convinced by an improved analysis) in the review or to solicit at least the assessment of leading experts that have no direct or indirect affiliation with the authors.

The two reviews provided by Lindzen and Choi do not qualify against any of those criteria. Both scientists are formally eligible for refereeing according to the PNAS rules, but one of them (WH) is certainly not an expert for the topic in question and the other one (MDC) has published extensively on the very subject together with Lindzen. So, in a sense, he is reviewing his own work.

I therefore recommend we ask for additional reviews. The final outcome could well be positive, and the process would then considerably strengthen the position of the authors.

The Editorial Board has recommended additional referees to evaluate the paper. Drs. Susan Solomon, Kevin Trenberth, Gavin Schmidt, James G. Anderson and Veerabhadran Ramanathan were suggested as possible reviewers to offer an opinion on the work. The Board will seek the comments of at least one of these reviewers unless you have any specific objections to our contacting these experts. Once the comments of the referee(s) are received, the Board will make a final determination on the article.

I have enclosed a copy of my most recent letter to members that outlines the procedures we follow for Editorial Board evaluation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Randy Schekman". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Randy Schekman  
Editor-in-Chief