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March 7, 2016

The Honorable Malcolm Turnbull
Prime Minister
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600 Australia

The Honorable Christopher Pyne
Leader of the House
Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600 Australia

Dear Prime Minister Turnbull and Science Minister Pyne,

We write to urge reconsideration of the major changes to CSIRO’s priorities announced early this month affecting in particular its climate science units. CSIRO’s climate measurement program is pivotal to climate characterisation in the southern hemisphere and can only be performed at a “national laboratory” level. Without CSIRO support, the measurements will not be done on the scale and of the quality needed for a huge region of the globe. While remote sensing data can have global coverage, measurements from field campaigns are essential for their validation (e.g., Wunch et al., 2011).

As representatives of scientific societies representing statistics—the science of learning from data, and of measuring, controlling, and communicating uncertainty—we can speak directly to the vital role of data in decision making. For the environment specifically, monitoring data are essential to making informed and cost-effective decisions on mitigation and adaptation in the face of uncertainties due to climate change (e.g., Katz et al., 2013).

While we understand there are budget challenges, the announced cuts to CSIRO’s climate measurement program will have long-term consequences to the ability to address and understand climate challenges.

Through this letter, we urge the Australian Government to continue CSIRO’s important climate monitoring programs. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Professor Peter Diggle
President of the Royal Statistical Society

Professor Jessica Utts
President of the American Statistical Association

R. W. Katz, P. F. Craigmile, P. Guttorp, M. Haran, B. Sanso, and M. L. Stein (2013). Uncertainty analysis in climate change assessments. *Nature Climate Change*, **3**, 769-771.

D. Wunch et al. (2011). A method for evaluating bias in global measurements of CO2 total columns from space. *Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics*, **11**, 12317-12337.