



Department
of Energy &
Climate Change

**Department of Energy & Climate
Change**

3 Whitehall Place,
London SW1A 2AW

E: foi@decc.gsi.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/decc

Our ref: **14/0037**

3 February 2014

Re: Request for Information

Thank you for your email dated 8 January 2014 to the Department of Energy & Climate Change (DECC), with the following request for information:

At PMQ today (8th Jan), the PM was asked by Tim Farron about recent bad weather.

The PM replied

"I agree with my Hon. Friend that we are seeing more abnormal weather events."

Please advise:

- 1) What evidence the PM has that "abnormal events are increasing"*
- 2) What evidence he has that the recent bad weather is in any way "abnormal"*

We have considered your request in accordance with the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 ('the EIRs') as the information you have sought disclosure of, does in our view, fall within the definition of 'environmental information' as stated in the EIRs.

I am writing to advise you that the information you requested is not held by this Department.

Due to the nature of the information that you are seeking, your request may be more appropriately addressed to the Cabinet Office. If you have not already done so, then you may wish to write to:



FOI Team
Cabinet Office
Room 3.32
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

Email foi.team@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk

Although DECC do not hold the specific information you have requested, I can advise you that there is information already in the public domain that may be of interest to you. Scientific evidence for increasing occurrence of some types of extreme weather events can be obtained from amongst others, the following sources:

- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) recently published Working Group I contribution to its Fifth Assessment Report (AR5)¹
- Scientific papers published in the Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society (BAMS) in both 2012 and 2013, on the subject of explaining extreme events from a climate perspective^{2,3}
- The IPCC Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation (SREX)⁴
- Scientific papers published on the human influence on the risk of various extreme events, for example the England and Wales floods in Autumn 2000⁵.

The AR5 report shows there is growing evidence that some types of extreme weather events are intensifying. It concludes, for example, that:

¹ IPCC, 2013: Summary for Policymakers. In: *Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*. See Table SPM.1. <http://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/wg1/>

² Peterson *et al* (Eds) 2013. Explaining Extreme Events of 2012 from a Climate Perspective. Special Supplement to the *Bull. Amer. Meteor. Soc.*, **94** (9), S1–S74. <http://www.ametsoc.org/2012extremeeventsclimate.pdf>

³ Peterson, T.C., Stott, P. A., Herring, S. (Eds) 2012. Explaining Extreme Events of 2011 from a Climate Perspective. *Bull. Amer. Meteor. Soc.*, **93**, 1041–1067. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1175/BAMS-D-12-00021.1>

⁴ IPCC, 2012: Summary for Policymakers. In: *Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation* [Field *et al*, (eds.)]. A Special Report of Working Groups I and II of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, and New York, NY, USA, pp. 1-19. <http://ipcc-wg2.gov/SREX/>

⁵ Pall *et al*, 2011. Anthropogenic greenhouse gas contribution to flood risk in England and Wales in autumn 2000. *Nature* **470**, 382–385. doi:10.1038/nature09762.



- There are likely more land regions where the number of heavy precipitation events has increased than where it has decreased since 1950; and
- Over this period, the frequency or intensity of heavy precipitation events has likely increased in North America and Europe.

Within the UK, the rainfall totals over a period of several weeks around December time this winter were extreme and December was the wettest on record in Scotland⁶. On 30th January, the Met Office also announced that this January has been the wettest on record (going back to 1910), for Southeast and central Southern England⁷.

I hope this is helpful.

Appeals Procedure

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be sent to the Information Rights Unit at:

Information Rights Unit (DECC Shared Services)
Department for Business, Innovation & Skills
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET
E-mail: foi.requests@decc.gsi.gov.uk

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely

Climate Science Team
Science and Innovation Group

⁶ <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/climate/uk/interesting/2013-decwind>

⁷ <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/news/releases/archive/2014/Early-January-Stats>

