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Ministry of Economic Affairs,  
Agriculture and Innovation

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Datum **19 DEC. 2011**  
Betreft Westerschelde

Dear Mr Townend,

I recently contacted you to ask if you would be willing to give us the benefit of your expertise by providing an independent opinion of a report published in the Netherlands regarding nature restoration in the Western Scheldt estuary. I am delighted at your positive response to my request on behalf of the Dutch State Secretary of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation, and that you are willing to give your independent judgement of the above-mentioned report.

I am writing to provide you with the following additional information. As I already informed you, a debate is currently taking place in the Netherlands regarding measures for nature restoration in the Western Scheldt estuary. The Netherlands has an important role in the task of maintaining the current ecological value of the estuary of the Western Scheldt. In June 2011, the Dutch parliament voted in favour of a package of governmental measures designed to promote nature restoration in the Western Scheldt. This package of measures focuses particularly on taking steps outside the dikes, i.e. in the estuary itself, due to the social sensitivity of the decision to flood polders in particular areas in order to create more space within the estuary.

The package of measures proposed by the Dutch government regarding nature restoration in the Western Scheldt is based on scientific recommendations made by Deltares, a Dutch institute for applied research and development. The European Commission recently asked questions about the Dutch approach to nature restoration in the Western Scheldt. Some of those comments are related to the extent to which the Netherlands has scientifically underpinned its measures. The Dutch government takes the stance that it has adequately underpinned its proposals. Nevertheless, the State Secretary wants to ascertain once more that the approach he has chosen is founded on sufficient and up-to-date scientific insights.



Please find enclosed the following documents:

Bureau Bestuursraad

- translation of the main Deltares report in English. The relevant appendices to the report are currently still being translated and will be sent to you as soon as they become available.
- English translation of the letter sent by the Dutch government to the Lower House of the Dutch Parliament relating to the package of measures for nature restoration in the Western Scheldt, based on the Deltares report.
- the letter sent by the European Commission in response to the Dutch measures for nature restoration in the Western Scheldt.

Onze referentie  
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With regard to the review, I would like to ask you to pass judgement, on the basis of your own expertise, on the question of whether the measures proposed in the Deltares report can be expected to result in the effects also described in the report.

It goes without saying that I am prepared to remunerate you for the costs incurred with regard to the work involved in the review. I look forward to receiving a statement of the costs incurred, together with your response. I would also like to ask you not to actively correspond with third parties regarding your findings.

I would greatly appreciate it if we could receive your findings relating to the report as soon as possible, before the Christmas holiday period begins. Please send your findings marked for the attention of myself, the undersigned, to the following postal address: Postbus 20401, 2500 EK Den Haag, The Netherlands. I would appreciate it if you could also send your response to us by e-mail. This can be sent to the e-mail address of the project leader for nature restoration in the Western Scheldt:

Thank you once again for your willingness to give us the benefit of your expertise and to provide me with your assessment of the report.

Yours sincerely,



mr.dr. P.  
Director General