

Fielding's climate mission

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THE fact-finding mission to the US of Family First senator Steve Fielding has culminated in him giving senior White House staff graphs provided by climate change sceptics and asking why he should not believe them.

Senator Fielding emailed graphs that claim the globe had not warmed for a decade to Joseph Aldy, US President Barack Obama's special assistant on energy and the environment, after a meeting on Thursday.

Speaking from Washington, Senator Fielding said that asking the White House to explain why it is convinced global warming is linked to greenhouse emissions was part of "picking up the fight for the underdog".

He earlier attended a climate sceptics' conference run by free-market think tank the Heartland Institute — part of a trip to "hear both sides".



Steve Fielding: Emailed graphs to Joseph Aldy, assistant to Barack Obama.

Senator Fielding said he found that Dr Aldy and other Obama Administration officials were not interested in discussing the legitimacy of climate science.

The talks focused on the Democrats' Waxman-Markey climate bill, expected to go before Congress in August.

"Generally, they are not keen in engaging too much in the other view (on the science)," Senator Fielding said.

He said Dr Aldy had agreed to answer his email.

The trip comes as the Federal Government attempts to find some unlikely common ground with Senate cross-benchers in a bid to have its

emissions trading legislation passed this year.

Senator Fielding said he wants the science "cleared up" before he decides how to vote. He supports a Coalition push to delay vote until after an international climate summit in Copenhagen in December.

He said he was open-minded on climate science, but "there seemed to be merit" in claims that global warming had stopped and solar activity had a greater influence on temperature.

A majority of climate scientists say the long-term warming trend due to greenhouse emissions is clear: that six of the warmest years since industrialisation were between 1998 and 2006.

"I now need the science to be resolved," Senator Fielding said. "I would be derelict in my duties and I think I'd be letting down the Australian people if I didn't properly research the issues and relied on one side of the debate."