

This discussion paper is/has been under review for the journal Earth System Science Data (ESSD). Please refer to the corresponding final paper in ESSD if available.

Editor comment: Global carbon budget 2015

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As Chief Editors of *Earth System Science Data* we have decided to shelter this manuscript from public access but to publish all reviewer comments and author replies – the entire discussion – as usual only after final processing (for acceptance or rejection).

We strongly affirm our commitment to the open access ideals of *ESSD* and Copernicus but recognise in this particular case a valid need for caution and discretion. With heightened political and public attention to trends of and plans for carbon emissions in advance of the upcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference, we already observe vigorous if not entirely accurate emissions discussions particularly in public media and the climate blogosphere. In this hyperactive environment the scientists of the Global Carbon Project, preparing their 2015 budget numbers and scientific conclusions, must take extreme care in the veracity of their data and their research conclusions and in the timing of public release of both data and research. A conversation among authors and journal editors has identified simultaneous release of fully reviewed data and research on a timely date to achieve proper attention and impact. *ESSD* respects and concurs with those discussions and that release plan.

With that schedule and goal in mind we have arranged with the authors to restrict public access to the 2015 carbon budget data as we conduct our usual full and rigorous review. We agree that premature exposure would very likely result in rabid and spurious politicalisation of the – not finalised – emissions data and substantial distraction from and perhaps damage to associated science papers. After the release date we will make all materials – manuscript, review comments, author responses, revised manuscripts, etc. – fully and completely open as part of the long-term *ESSD* record.

From an *ESSD* point of view we feel quite proud of the sequence of global carbon budget data published in this journal, and particularly – as the open record clearly shows – of the consistent value added by *ESSD* review processes. We will not relax our quality standards under any circumstance and we appreciate that the Global Carbon Project has again submitted their important work to *ESSD*. We accept that the

circumstance, timing and content of this particular data set requires and justifies a short period of restricted access.

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