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Economics of Insurance against Climate Change

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Economics of insurance against climate change

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VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT

Economics of Insurance against Climate Change

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad Doctor aan
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op gezag van de rector magnificus
prof.dr. L.M. Bouter,
in het openbaar te verdedigen
ten overstaan van de promotiecommissie
van de faculteit der Economische Wetenschappen en Bedrijfskunde
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door

Willem Jan Wouter Botzen

geboren te Grave

promotor: prof.dr. J.C.J.M. van den Bergh

Preface and acknowledgements

Over the past three years I have worked with a lot of enthusiasm on the booklet lying in front of you. As a child I grew up in the picturesque city of Grave on the banks of the River Meuse, so that by then I had already experienced the importance of water in our lives, albeit in a fun and innocent way. During my holidays I used to spend much time around rivers and lakes: the hobbies I mostly enjoyed were swimming, fishing, and boating. When I was 10 and 12 years old my dad used to drive me around our region to look at the high tides of the river and watch the local floods of the Meuse in 1993 and 1995. I was impressed by the enormous extent the river had reached. I vividly remember how people living near it were evacuated using large trucks and bulldozers driving through a water level of almost 1 metre, which for a child looked like a massive height. Fortunately, at that moment I did not realize yet how much time I would spend later in my life on this issue of rising water. The importance of the topical theme of climate change and related flood risks in the scientific and political debate has increased considerably since I started my work in 2006, and this has been very stimulating. I am grateful that I have been provided with the opportunity to make a contribution to research on climate change adaptation from the perspective of economics. My research was funded by the Dutch National Research Programme ‘Climate Changes Spatial Planning’.

Several people have supported my work on this thesis. I am glad that Philip Marey encouraged me to join the academic life when he was supervising my Master’s thesis at the University of Maastricht. Jeroen van den Bergh and Jeroen Aerts persuaded me to work on this PhD thesis at the VU University in Amsterdam. My intuition that this would result in a fruitful cooperation was correct. I am very grateful to Jeroen van den Bergh, who was more than an excellent and very involved promotor. He has been a source of inspiration for my work and taught me to grow as an academic. His strong commitment to this thesis remained unchanged after his move to Barcelona, which is admirable. My several stays with him at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) resulted in a useful exchange of ideas and provided a pleasant working environment. I thank the environmental economics group of UAB for their warm hospitality. Moreover, I am very thankful to Jeroen Aerts for initiating this project and his support of my work. Our shared interest in this research resulted in several joint articles and his advice on this

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