



Highlights of [GAO-06-1126T](#), testimony before the Subcommittee on Energy and Resources, Committee on Government Reform, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) reports on federal funding for climate research and to develop technologies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, among other things. The Climate Change Science Program (CCSP), which coordinates many agencies' activities, also reports on science funding. The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Climate Leaders and the Department of Energy's (DOE's) Climate VISION programs aim to reduce such emissions through voluntary industry efforts.

This testimony is based on GAO's August 2005 report *Climate Change: Federal Reports on Climate Change Funding Should Be Clearer and More Complete* (GAO-05-461) and its April 2006 report *Climate Change: EPA and DOE Should Do More to Encourage Progress Under Two Voluntary Programs* (GAO-06-97), which addressed (1) reported changes in federal climate change funding and (2) the status and progress of two federal voluntary climate programs.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommended actions to improve OMB's and CCSP's reporting. GAO recommended that both EPA and DOE develop written policies on what to do about participants not meeting program expectations. All four agencies appear to have taken steps to implement our recommendations, but we have not fully reviewed the extent to which they have done so.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-06-1126T.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact John Stephenson at (202) 512-3841 or StephensonJ@gao.gov.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Federal Agencies Could Do More to Make Funding Reports Clearer and Encourage Progress on Two Voluntary Programs

What GAO Found

Federal funding for climate change, as reported by OMB, increased from \$2.35 billion in 1993 to \$5.09 billion in 2004 (117 percent), or from \$3.28 billion to \$5.09 billion (55 percent) after adjusting for inflation. OMB reports show that, during this period, funding increased for technology, science, and—before adjusting for inflation—international assistance. CCSP, which reports only science funding, generally presented totals that were consistent with OMB's, but provided more detail. However, changes in reporting methods used by both OMB and CCSP limit the comparability of funding data over time, and therefore it was unclear whether total funding actually increased as reported. Furthermore, we were unable to compare changes in the fourth category (climate-related tax expenditures), because from 1993 to 2004 OMB reported estimates for proposed but not existing tax expenditures. With regard to individual agencies' funding, OMB reported that 12 of the 14 agencies receiving funding for climate change programs in 2004 received more funding in that year than they had in 1993, but it is unclear whether funding changed as OMB reported because of unexplained changes in what was defined as climate change funding. Reported funding for DOE, the agency with the most reported climate-related funding in 2004, increased from \$963 million to \$2.52 billion (162 percent), or from \$1.34 billion to \$2.52 billion (88 percent) after adjusting for inflation. DOE and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration accounted for 81 percent of the reported increase in funding from 1993 through 2004. However, because agency funding totals are composed of individual accounts, changes in the reports' contents, such as the unexplained addition of accounts to the technology category, limit the comparability of agencies' funding data over time, making it difficult to determine if these are real or definitional increases.

EPA and DOE expected participants in their voluntary climate programs to complete several program steps within general time frames, but participants' progress in completing those steps within the time frames was mixed. Furthermore, DOE did not have a system for tracking groups' progress in completing program steps, and neither DOE nor EPA had a written policy specifying the consequences for participants not proceeding as expected. In addition, EPA and DOE had both estimated the share of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions attributable to participants in their respective programs and were working through an interagency process to quantify emissions reductions attributable to their programs. However, determining reductions attributable to each program will be challenging because of the overlap between these programs and other voluntary programs and because it is difficult to determine how much of a participant's emissions reductions can be attributed to its participation in the program, since the participant's emissions in the absence of the program cannot be known.