



Hearing Summary

HEARING ON ALLEGATIONS OF POLITICAL INTERFERENCE WITH SCIENCE: GLOBAL WARMING, Part II

Rep. Henry A. Waxman

Chairman, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

On Monday, March 19, 2007, the Committee held a second oversight hearing on allegations of political interference with government climate change science. Witnesses at the hearing included the former Chief of Staff of the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), the current Chairman of CEQ, the Director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, and a former NASA public affairs officer. At the hearing, the Committee examined evidence of White House efforts to minimize the significance of climate change.

Numerous White House Edits. Documents provided to the Committee and testimony by Philip Cooney, the former CEQ Chief of Staff, revealed that Mr. Cooney and his staff made hundreds of separate edits to the government's "strategic plan" for climate change research. These changes injected doubt in place of certainty, minimized the dangers of climate change, and diminished the human role in causing the planet to warm. Other key government reports — including EPA's *Draft Report on the Environment* and an annual report to Congress called *Our Changing Planet* — were subject to similar edits and distortions. The extensive edits to EPA's *Draft Report on the Environment* so undermined its scientific integrity that EPA Administrator Christie Whitman opted to remove the entire climate change section from the report.

Edits Consistent with Oil Industry Views. Before joining CEQ in 2001, Mr. Cooney was a lobbyist and the climate team leader at the American Petroleum Institute (API). After leaving the White House in 2005, he became a Corporate Issues Manager at ExxonMobil. One API document referred to climate change as API's highest priority issue because "policies limiting carbon emissions reduce petroleum product use." Another API document stated: "Victory will be achieved when average citizens understand uncertainties in climate science." When asked about Mr. Cooney's edits, Dr. James Hansen of NASA testified: "They consistently are always of one nature, and that is to raise doubt."

Communications with the Vice President's Office. Mr. Cooney discussed efforts to inject uncertainty into the global warming debate with the Office of the Vice President. In an April 21, 2003, memorandum to Kevin O'Donovan of the Office of the Vice President, Mr. Cooney wrote: "The recent paper of Soon-Baliunas contradicts a dogmatic view held by many in the climate science community that the past century was the warmest in the past millennium and signals of human induced 'global warming.' ... We plan to begin to refer to this study in Administration communications on the science of global climate change...to potentially invigorate debate on the actual climate history of the past 1000

years." Mr. Cooney confirmed at the hearing that he had numerous conversations with Mr. O'Donovan to "consult" and "compare notes."

NASA Attempts to Muzzle Climate Scientists. George Deutsch, a former NASA public affairs official, testified that the NASA press secretary decided that National Public Radio should not be permitted to interview Dr. Hansen about global warming. According to Mr. Deutsch, the press secretary's main concern was "hitting our messages and not getting dragged down into discussions we shouldn't get into." Dr. Hansen explained that this type of interference is "going on all the time, but most of the people doing that...won't make the mistake of putting the thing on paper like that."

Additional information, including Chairman Waxman's statement and copies of testimony, is available at www.oversight.house.gov.