

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6175

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September 26, 2013

Todd Stern
Special Envoy for Climate Change
U.S. State Department
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. Stern:

We have followed with great interest the Administration's ongoing participation in the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), particularly as the IPCC moves ahead with the issuance of the Fifth Assessment Report in the coming days. We are concerned by the Administration's efforts to downplay the current, 15-year hiatus in global temperature increases, even as the Administration participates in international efforts to explain why prior IPCC predictions of global temperature increases could have been so wrong. As reported last week by the Associated Press (AP),¹ several nations lobbied the IPCC to craft an explanation in the IPCC Fifth Assessment that accounts for the lack of global temperature increases since 1998. According to the AP, the U.S. "urged the [IPCC] authors to include the 'leading hypothesis' that the reduction in warming is linked to more heat being transferred to the deep ocean." It appears that the U.S. did not, however, suggest that there could be potential flaws in the models themselves.

With the benefit of decades of actual temperature data to evaluate, the climate forecasting models used by the IPCC and other climate alarmists over the last twenty years have now been shown to have over-predicted the extent to which the planet's temperatures would increase. The fact that these models overestimate the extent of global temperature increases since 1998 has been recognized in many publications, including the scientific journal *Nature*.² This 15-year period without measurable warming occurred at a time of record-breaking greenhouse gas emissions. These facts are deeply disappointing to those who have been demanding immediate and costly international and U.S. actions on the basis of these previous IPCC predictions. In a July 2013 Minority Report entitled *Critical Thinking on Climate Change*, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee outlined a number of predictions by liberal

¹ *Climate report struggles with temperature quirks*, Associated Press, September 19, 2013
http://www.stltoday.com/news/world/warming-lull-haunts-authors-of-key-climate-report/article_854a3c31-0a0d-5345-8a2d-85cedcb71017.html

² *Overestimated Global Warming over the Past 20 Years*, John C. Fyfe, Nathan P. Gillett and Francis W. Zwiers, NATURE CLIMATE CHANGE | VOL 3 | SEPTEMBER 2013
<http://www.see.ed.ac.uk/~shs/Climate%20change/Climate%20model%20results/over%20estimate.pdf>

politicians and other alarmists made over the last 30 years on a range of climate issues that have not been borne out by the actual data.

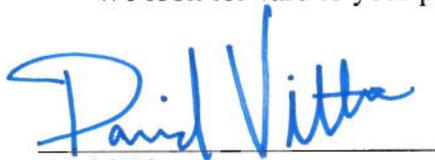
Moreover, according to the recent AP report, it would appear that the Administration has chosen to ignore the real potential for flaws in the climate models and, instead, decided to lobby the IPCC to downplay the lack of warming since 1998 by asserting the possibility that the oceans had absorbed heat energy that was otherwise expected to have manifested itself in higher global temperatures. On the other hand, the report suggests that Germany lobbied for the lack of warming since 1998 to be wholly erased from the report, and Belgium wanted a completely new starting year for measuring statistics. These efforts renew concerns that the IPCC is engaged in a political, not scientific, process.

Further, the Administration's lobbying efforts at the IPCC directly contradict the President's own recent statements on climate change. As you know, the President recently claimed that "the temperature around the globe is increasing faster than was predicted even 10 years ago"³ and that "the climate is warming faster than anybody anticipated five or 10 years ago."⁴ On several occasions, the EPW Committee has requested data supporting this claim by the President. To date, the Administration has failed to provide the requested data and analysis.

This matter raises several important questions:

1. Why would the Administration lobby the IPCC to explain the lack of warming in the IPCC report when the President has stated repeatedly that global temperatures are increasing faster than predicted?
2. Was the President correct when he stated that "the temperature around the globe is increasing faster than was predicted even 10 years ago"?
3. Did you or anyone in your office attempt to correct the President after he made this claim publicly, knowing that you would be lobbying the IPCC to find the best way to explain why the temperatures have not, in fact, increased as much as was predicted a decade ago?
4. What role did the State Department, and your office in particular, play in developing the new estimates for the Social Cost of Carbon?

We look forward to your prompt response.


David Vitter
U.S. Senator

Sincerely,


Jeff Sessions
U.S. Senator

³ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/11/14/remarks-president-news-conference>

⁴ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/05/30/remarks-president-dccc-event>



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