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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6175

BETTINA POIRIER, STAFF DIRECTOR
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December 1, 2009

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
Chairman
Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6175

Dear Chairman Boxer:

The recent disclosure of emails between several prominent climatologists—including the authors of temperature records used by the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)—raises a number of issues, including the following: 1) potential violations of federal and state information disclosure laws; 2) a possible conspiracy by scientists, some of whom receive or have received US taxpayer funds, to stifle open, transparent debate on the most pressing issues of climate science; 3) an apparent coordinated effort to distort and falsify data; and 4) the appearance of a campaign to vilify scientists who question global warming alarmism.

The emails reveal apparent deceitful manipulation of important data and research used by, among others, the US Global Change Research Program and the IPCC. For instance, one scientist wrote of a “trick” he employed to “hide the decline” in global temperature trends; he also discussed attempts to “redefine what the peer-review literature is” to prevent papers questioning global warming alarmism from appearing in IPCC reports. Another scientist stated, “The fact is that we can’t account for the lack of warming and it is a travesty that we can’t.” Still another wrote, “I tried hard to balance the needs of the science and the IPCC, which were not always the same.”

In addition to these issues, the emails could have far-reaching policy implications, affecting everything from (to name a few) cap-and-trade legislation, state and regional climate change programs, the Environmental Protection Agency’s “Proposed Endangerment and Cause or Contribute Findings for Greenhouse Gases Under Section 202(a) of the Clean Air Act,” the US Global Change Research Program, global climate models used by federal agencies, the Department of Interior’s coordinated strategy to address climate change impacts, and international climate change negotiations.

Many of these policies and positions will have enormous economic impacts, not least the EPA’s proposed endangerment finding, which, when finalized, will lead to a torrent of new federal regulations that will destroy thousands of jobs and make electricity and gasoline more expensive for consumers and small businesses. The same can be said for cap-and-trade legislation,

including the very bill you introduced and reported to the full Senate, as well as the Waxman-Markey bill passed by the House in June.

In short, the stakes involved are of major consequence, and so I respectfully request that you hold hearings to examine the suite of issues involved, including whether laws were broken, key studies compromised, proposed regulations undermined, and taxpayer-funded climate change research deliberately obscured or manipulated. I am encouraged that the House Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming will examine at least some of these issues in a hearing tomorrow. As we have on other issues before the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, I look forward to working together on this important matter.

Sincerely,



James M. Inhofe
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Environment
and Public Works