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United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510–6175

July 15, 2013

The Honorable Barack Obama
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

As you are aware, last week my fellow Environment and Public Works Committee Republicans and I sent a letter to Senator Boxer requesting the presence of federal witnesses at this Thursday's hearing entitled "Climate Change: It's Happening Now." I am requesting your active participation in providing representatives of your Administration that Senator Boxer has failed to include. This hearing is timely in light of your recent announcement of a "Climate Action Plan" at Georgetown University, where you committed to a "coordinated assault on a changing climate."[1] In this speech, you highlighted a mere fraction of the federal actions being taken unilaterally by your Administration to address climate change.

To date, Chairman Barbara Boxer has refused to invite any government witnesses to participate in this hearing. Although she assured the press that she will have a panel of government witnesses at another hearing later in the year, I remain uncertain of her commitment to fulfilling that promise. Her similar agreement to hold a hearing on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's budget, which has traditionally been an item of regular order for the Committee, has failed to come to fruition.

The potential for your climate plan to exacerbate the serious economic problems that currently persist justifies providing a panel of federal witnesses who are charged with implementing your agenda, to testify as to the scope, purpose, and consequences of such unilateral action. Today, only 47% of Americans have a full time job,[2] the workforce participation rate is at its lowest level since the Carter Administration,[3] and the national unemployment rate has exceeded 7.5% for the longest period since the Bureau of Labor Statistics started tracking it.[4] At the end of your second term in office, the federal debt will likely exceed $20 trillion, further frustrating America's future.

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[1] President Barack Obama, Remarks by the President on Climate Change (June 25, 2013).
[2] News Release, U.S Dep't of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, The Employment Situation-June 2013 (July 5, 2013) (*available at* http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/empsit.pdf).
[3] U.S. Dep't of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Databases, Tables & Calculators by Subject, 1979-2013. (July 10, 2013) (*available at* http://data.bls.gov/pdq/SurveyOutputServlet).
[4] CONG. BUDGET OFF., U.S CONGRESS, PUB. NO. 4649, THE BUDGET AND ECONOMIC OUTLOOK: FISCAL YEARS 2013 TO 2023 (2013).

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The American people should not be kept in the dark regarding the scope of the actions your Administration is taking under the guise of controlling our climate – actions that have the potential to negatively impact employment, job creation, and our national debt. These actions are being taken without China, India, and Russia – some of the world's largest carbon emitters – placing similar constraints on their economies.

European nations continue to reconsider their own climate policies as their economies continue to suffer, interest in an international agreement further wanes, global warming continues to poll as one of the issues of least concern to our fellow Americans,[5] and global temperatures continue to fail to meet the climate model predictions of the last thirty years.[6] Enumerated below are just a few important reasons for including a panel of federal witnesses at the July 18 hearing:

1. Your Interagency Working Group (IWG), without providing for public comment or peer review, and ignoring OMB guidance, adjusted upwards the Social Cost of Carbon (SCC)[7] to modify the accounting for benefits claims from regulatory actions. Regulation of greenhouse gases from new and existing sources is set to cripple numerous large scale manufacturing and energy projects across the nation, creating an environment in which foreign countries will become far more attractive for future investment, potentially undermining our economy.

2. For more than nine months, the Treasury Department stonewalled multiple transparency requests regarding internal work on the development of a carbon tax, as well as the sources of funding for international climate commitments that were negotiated behind closed doors.[8]

3. The Department of Interior continues to cut off access to minerals and other natural resources for energy development.[9] It also continues to craft multiple new layers of federal designations and bureaucracy certain to continue the decline in energy production on federal lands. It is critical that Congress has a clear understanding of how the Interior Department plans to utilize federal lands.

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[5] *Climate Change and Financial Instability Seen as Top Global Threats*, PEW RESEARCH CTR. (June 24, 2013), http://www.pewglobal.org/2013/06/24/climate-change-and-financial-instability-seen-as-top-global-threats/#fn-27454-1.

[6] *Climate Science: A Sensitive Matter*, THE ECONOMIST, Mar. 30, 2013, http://www.economist.com/news/science-and-technology/21574461-climate-may-be-heating-up-less-response-greenhouse-gas-emissions.

[7] The White House, Technical Update of the Social Cost of Carbon for Regulatory Impact Analysis, May 2013.

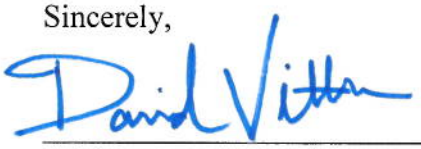
[8] Press Release, Republican Env't and Pub. Works Comm., Vitter: Still No Transparency at Treasury with Carbon Tax E-Mails (Jan. 14, 2013) (*available at* http://www.epw.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Minority.PressReleases&ContentRecord_id=39ca37b0-a603-b2a4-5349-13e5ddf0a594.

[9] *IER Analysis: Oil and Gas Production Declines on Federal Lands in FY 2011*, INST. FOR ENERGY RESEARCH, Feb. 23, 2012, http://www.instituteforenergyresearch.org/2012/02/23/ier-analysis-oil-and-gas-production-declines-on-federal-lands-in-fy2011/.

4. The Department of Energy's (DOE) "green" energy grant and loan programs have been a disaster by any measure. [10] While the stimulus funds that went to now-bankrupt Solyndra received the most public notoriety, total federal stimulus spending cost $11.25 million for every permanent "green" job,[11] and the DOE Inspector General has on more than one occasion found problems with efficiency and other federal grant and loan programs.[12]

An Administration taking such sweeping actions on climate change should be ready to defend those actions before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. I am certain Chairman Boxer would accommodate the President of the United States in a request to have his Administration officials represent what he so proudly touts as being good for America. There seems to be little point in holding a hearing on climate change policy that excludes witnesses from our own federal government who could explain the national climate change "policy" unilaterally established by your Administration. As our government sets in motion a litany of new actions with significant economic implications, I ask that you encourage Congressional oversight of federal policy decisions related to these attempts at controlling the climate.

Sincerely,



David Vitter
Ranking Member

[10] Steve Hargreaves, *Obama's Alternative Energy Bankruptcies*, CNN (Oct. 22, 1012, 11:16 PM), http://money.cnn.com/2012/10/22/news/economy/obama-energy-bankruptcies/index.html.
[11] *The Department of Energy Committed $11 Million Per Job*, INST. FOR ENERGY RESEARCH, May 8, 2013, http://www.instituteforenergyresearch.org/2013/05/08/does-11-million-jobs/.
[12] THE DEP'T OF ENERGY, OFF. OF INSPECTOR GEN., OFF. OF AUDITS AND INSPECTIONS, OAS-RA-11-14, THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY'S WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FUNDED UNDER THE AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA (2011), *available at* http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/OAS-RA-11-14.pdf.