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Statement of Chairman Henry A. Waxman
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Hearing
Allegations of Political Interference with the Work of
Government Climate Change Scientists
January 30, 2007

I want to welcome everyone to today's meeting. It is the first hearing we are having this year and it focuses on one of the most important issues facing our nation and the world: global warming.

Most of my colleagues know that I bring some strong views to this subject. I have been working on global warming for almost twenty years and introduced Congress' first comprehensive global warming bill in 1992.

I believed then that the science on global warming was compelling enough to warrant action. And in the years since 1992, I believe the science has grown more and more compelling.

But despite my strong views, I would never want scientists to manipulate research so that they can tell me what they think I want to hear. I don't want politically correct science. I want the best science possible.

And that's what today's hearing is about. For several years, there have been allegations that the research of respected climate scientists was being distorted and suppressed by the Bush Administration. Some of these reports claimed that Phil Cooney, a former lobbyist for the American Petroleum industry, was put in charge of the Council on Environmental Quality and imposed his own views on the reports scientists had submitted to the White House.

Last Congress, under the leadership of Tom Davis, this Committee took the appropriate step and began investigating whether the Bush Administration was interfering with the science of global warming for political reasons.

I joined with Chairman Davis in requesting routine documents from the White House's Council on Environmental Quality. When the White House resisted, we narrowed our request. When the White House resisted again, we again scaled back what had already been a reasonable

request. And when the White House resisted a third time, we again tried to accommodate the President.

In addition to repeatedly narrowing our request, we extended the deadlines we had suggested to the White House. But even after all those courtesies, we have received virtually nothing from this Administration. Last evening, we finally received a total of nine nonpublic documents. Unfortunately, they add little to our inquiry. In some cases, they do not even appear to be records we were seeking.

It is a privilege to chair this Committee. The Oversight Committee is charged with an essential responsibility: bringing accountability to our government. I take this very seriously. As Chairman I intend to be fair to every witness and to invoke the Committee's broad powers only when absolutely necessary. But I also intend to be thorough, to insist on Congress' right to receive relevant information, and to do everything possible to meet the important obligation we have to the American people.

In this instance, the Committee isn't trying to obtain state secrets or documents that could affect our immediate national security. We are simply seeking answers to whether the White House's political staff is inappropriately censoring impartial government scientists.

Last fall, our staffs viewed some of the documents the Committee is seeking *in camera*. As a result of this review, we know that the White House possesses documents that contain evidence of an attempt by senior Administration officials to mislead the public by injecting doubt into the science of global warming and minimizing the potential dangers. I believe Congress is entitled to these documents.

According to the documents we reviewed, Administration officials sought to edit an EPA report (1) to add "balance" by emphasizing the "beneficial effects" of climate change, (2) to delete a discussion of the human health and environmental effects of climate change, (3) to strike any discussion of atmospheric concentrations of carbon because carbon levels are not a "good indicator of climate change," and (4) to remove the statement that "changes observed over the last several decades are likely mostly the result of human activities." Some of the most questionable edits were urged by Phillip Cooney, the former oil industry lobbyist who was the chief of staff of the White House Council on Environmental Quality.

Today, I am sending a letter to the White House about the documents and to urge the White House to reconsider the confrontational approach it is now taking. This letter describes in more detail what we know about the documents, and I ask that it be made part of the hearing record.

I am looking forward to hearing the testimony of today's witnesses. We are fortunate to have the Union of Concerned Scientists here and to have the opportunity to review their new report on political interference into the scientific process.

I also want to welcome Dr. Drew Shindell to the Committee. Dr. Shindell is a top climate researcher at NASA's Goddard Center. He will testify about the difficulties he has faced

in alerting the public to his important climate research. Dr. Shindell is testifying on his own behalf today, and he has earned our gratitude for having the courage to step forward.

I'd also like to note that Rick Piltz is testifying today for the first time. Mr. Piltz is the government employee who publicly objected when the Council on Environmental Quality started overruling the views of climate scientists. And we are pleased that Roger Pielke is able to join us.

All of us have a right to our own views about the seriousness of global warming. But we don't have a right to our own science. This hearing — and the Committee's ongoing investigation into political interference — is aimed at ensuring the American people receive the best science possible.