



THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND GLOBAL WARMING

Opening Statement for Edward J. Markey (D-MA) "The Administration's View on the State of Climate Science" Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming December 2, 2009

For many Members of Congress and the public, the concern about global warming may seem like a relatively new development. In fact scientists -- including those advising the U.S. government -- have issued warnings about the rising concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere throughout the last 4 decades.

After a report from his science advisory committee, President Lyndon Johnson noted in a 1965 special address to Congress that "a steady increase in carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels" has altered the composition of the atmosphere. In 1978, Robert White, the first administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), warned that carbon dioxide emissions "can have consequences for climate that pose a considerable threat to future society."

More recently, the National Academy of Sciences found in a 2001 report requested by President Bush that "global warming could well have serious adverse societal and ecological impacts by the end of this century." In a report issued earlier this year, U.S. science agencies concluded that "climate changes are underway in the United States and are projected to grow."

Administration scientists once predicted the impacts of global warming. Now they can confirm them. And, unfortunately, families from New Orleans to Alaska are living with the harsh consequences.

Given the upcoming international climate conference in Copenhagen and the continuing work on domestic clean energy legislation in Congress, an update on the administration's view on the state of climate science is timely.

In 2007, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) found in their comprehensive assessment that global warming is unequivocal and that this warming is primarily due to human activities.

This decade has been the hottest in recorded history, with all of the years since 2001 being in the top 10 hottest. This summer, the ocean was the warmest in NOAA's 130-year record. The extent of Arctic summer sea ice for the past few years has shrunk dramatically compared to the previous two decades, with a reduction roughly 3 times the

size of Texas. We must be aware that as the climate system warms, we risk passing certain “tipping points” of rapid and irreversible change.

In the United States, the effects are evident. Daily record high temperatures are being broken twice as often as daily lows. Our farms are threatened by rising temperatures, water scarcity, and pests. In the Northeast, extreme rainstorms and the risk of flooding have increased. In Alaska, villages are finding the land they call home literally melting out from underneath them as the permafrost thaws. In the West, the shrinking mountain snowpack and increasing droughts strain our water resource systems.

Fortunately, after decades of warnings, President Obama is partnering with Congress to realize a new vision for America: an America freed from dependence on foreign oil and, thriving as a leader of the new clean energy economy.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act included more than \$80 billion for clean energy investments to jump-start our economy and generate new clean energy jobs. The *Cash for Clunkers* Program took gas-guzzlers off the roads. Fuel economy standards were raised for Model Year 2011 cars and trucks, saving drivers money and spurring companies to develop more efficient, affordable vehicles.

In June, the House passed the Waxman-Markey American Clean Energy and Security Act. This legislation that will put us on a pollution-cutting path, and at the same time create millions of new jobs, making America the global leader of the clean energy economy. The Act will also create a National Climate Service that will provide decision-makers with vital climate science information.

As we move forward, we must continue to stay abreast of the most recent findings and to ground our policy in the latest climate science. Our witnesses today - Dr. John Holdren, the President’s science advisor and Dr. Jane Lubchenco, Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration – will help us do that.