

**Statement of Chairman Edward J. Markey (D-MA)**  
**Hearing on “Climate Science in the Political Arena”**  
**Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming**  
May 20, 2010

The disaster that is the BP oil spill continues to unfold in the Gulf of Mexico. Congress is focused on key questions: What happened and who is responsible? How much oil has spilled and what is its impact? How do we make decisions in the face of uncertainty? We face similar questions when confronted with the looming disaster of climate change caused by carbon pollution.

In both instances, lawmakers need to be informed by the best available science as they make decisions and seek clean energy solutions.

Today we are joined by some of the world’s foremost climate scientists, including the President of the National Academy of Science and a Nobel prize-winning atmospheric chemist. These scientists have been instrumental in informing the clean energy and climate change policy debate. Their work has helped identify the fingerprint of human activity on global warming amongst the background of natural variability. They have provided a risk framework to guide policymakers in the face of evolving science.

Just yesterday, the National Academy of Science issued three major reports about the science, the solutions, and the ways to adapt to climate change. These reports reinforce the overwhelming foundation of knowledge we have about the danger of carbon pollution.

This is a foundation still unshaken by a manufactured scandal over stolen emails. This knowledge was gained in an America that supports creative, inquisitive scientists. American scientists enjoy the freedom to follow the science where it leads and to work collaboratively, and sometimes combatively, with their colleagues. Preserving this freedom to explore new ideas and technologies is critical to understanding our world and finding solutions to our clean energy challenges.

Given the relevancy of their work to national priorities, our best scientists are increasingly drawn into the political arena. Disagreements over policies have led some to target both the science, and the scientists themselves.

The latest and most overt incident came earlier this month. Virginia’s Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli demanded that materials be turned over by the University of Virginia, relating to 5 grants that involved a former UVA professor, Dr. Michael Mann. Although Dr. Mann’s work has been examined by his peers and found to be sound, the Attorney General is using the controversy over his research as an excuse for a fishing expedition. The request to UVA asks for materials related to 39 people. Some of these are 2 critics of Dr. Mann. Some of them are far outside his field of expertise or the grants in question. Instead, the list reads like a Google search of “climate,” “emails,” and “IPCC.”

The Attorney General doesn't even ask for the records associated with all of Dr. Mann's co-investigators on the grants. If the investigation were truly about fraud, as the Attorney General claims, then you would expect him to seek all documents related to all of the scientists involved in the grants. This week, over 800 Virginia scientists sent a letter to Cuccenilli, suggesting his demand is transparently political and designed to intimidate.

This attempted intimidation is not new, but it is getting worse. Two weeks ago 255 members of the National Academy of Science, including 11 Nobel Prize winners, published a letter in Science magazine decrying the treatment of climate scientists and warning of the chilling effect on the greater scientific community.

The majority of climate research in the country is supported by federal funding. Recipients of these funds have a duty to work in an ethical, transparent way and communicate their findings in support of societal needs. Our witnesses today are dedicated to that premise, despite attempts to portray them to the contrary.

It seems fitting to close with a quote from the recent scientists' letter:

“We can ignore the science and hide our heads in the sand and hope we are lucky, or we can act in the public interest to reduce the threat of global climate change quickly and substantively.”