

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 24, 2013

The Honorable Gina McCarthy
Assistant Administrator
Office of Air and Radiation
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington DC 20460

Re: Assertions by the Administration about Global Temperature Predictions

Dear Assistant Administrator McCarthy:

We are writing to express continued concern with repeated assertions by the President regarding global temperature predictions and your refusal to provide data and analysis that would support his statements, as requested by Members of this Committee. We are referring, in particular, to two statements by the President. On November 14, 2012, President Obama stated that “the temperature around the globe is increasing faster than was predicted even 10 years ago.”¹ He made a similar statement again on May 29, 2013.²

These statements contradict the nearly universal view of those who have studied the data, including entities generally supportive of the Administration’s climate change policies. For instance, *The Economist* magazine recently explained that “temperatures have not really risen over the past ten years...”³ and that “[o]ver the past 15 years air temperatures at the Earth’s surface have been flat...”⁴ For global warming advocates, this lack of warming compared to predictions has been a “surprise” (to use the words of *The Economist*). Last month, BBC News reported: “Since 1998, there has been an unexplained ‘standstill’ in the heating of the Earth’s atmosphere.”⁵ In light of recent reports that the Administration is preparing to roll-out an aggressive regulatory program aimed at addressing rising global temperatures, your prompt attention to requests for EPA data on these matters is imperative.

¹ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/11/14/remarks-president-news-conference>

² <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/05/30/remarks-president-dccc-event>

³ <http://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21574490-climate-change-may-be-happening-more-slowly-scientists-thought-world-still-needs>

⁴ <http://www.economist.com/news/science-and-technology/21574461-climate-may-be-heating-up-less-response-greenhouse-gas-emissions/>

⁵ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-22567023>

Importantly, EPA has essentially ignored members of Congress who asked for EPA data due to concerns with the President's claims about global temperature predictions. For example, on December 4, 2012, Senator Sessions wrote former Administrator Jackson:

The actual temperature data show no significant change in global temperatures over the past decade and certainly less warming than the climate change models predicted. At an August 1, 2012, hearing before the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, ... climatologist Dr. John Christy of the University of Alabama-Huntsville offered testimony demonstrating that the IPCC climate models, which have been relied upon by alarmists, vastly over-stated the degree of warming in comparison to actual temperature data observed by advanced satellites. Dr. Christy's chart ... demonstrates that the IPCC models, on average, predicted a significant amount of warming that has not actually occurred. In fact, contrary to the President's assertion, the chart shows that global average temperatures have not increased at all over the past decade, and certainly less than was predicted 10 years ago.

The President's assertion also conflicts with the views of many other scientists and experts. In an editorial published earlier this year in the Wall Street Journal, scientists and engineers from MIT, Princeton, Cambridge, and other leading institutions explained that "perhaps the most inconvenient fact is the lack of global warming for well over 10 years now" and that there has been a "smaller-than-predicted warming over the 22 years since the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) began issuing projections." Additionally, the lead author of the 2007 IPCC climate report stated in an email that "we can't account for the lack of warming at the moment..."

As policymakers consider proposals aimed at addressing concerns about rising temperatures predicted by the IPCC climate models, a critical question is whether the planet is warming to the extent predicted by these models. The data suggest to me that the planet is not warming to the extent predicted 10 years ago.⁶

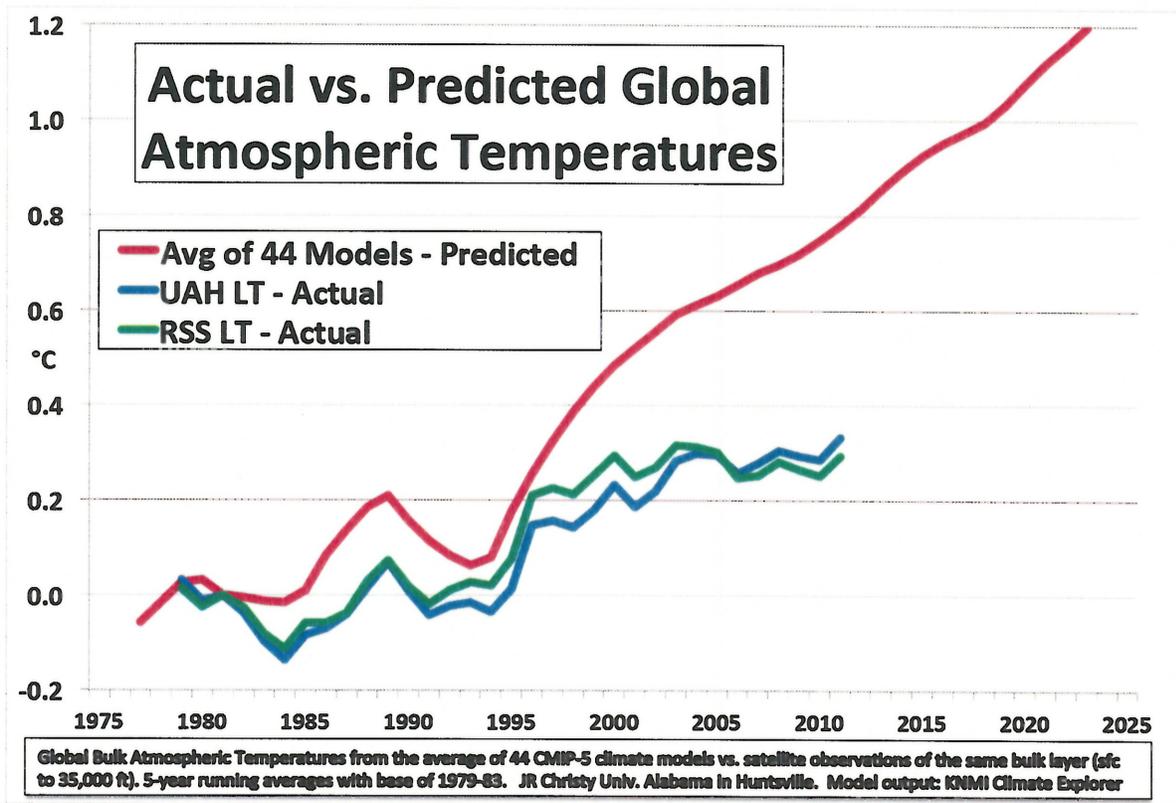
To shed light on this issue, Senator Sessions asked EPA to "provide the best available data that EPA would rely upon to support the President's assertion," along with an EPA-prepared chart comparing "actual global average temperature increases since 1979 (when satellite temperature data became available) versus the latest IPCC predictions..."

On behalf of Administrator Jackson, you responded to Senator Sessions in a letter dated February 14, 2013, by asserting that "there are multiple lines of evidence that clearly demonstrate that average global temperatures are rising..." yet you did not provide any of the requested data relating to average global temperatures. Instead, your letter seems to dodge Senator Sessions' data request by claiming that "only looking at 10 years of a single dataset cannot provide a full picture of climate change trends, and should also not be the sole test by which to judge the usefulness of climate models in either simulating past climates or projecting further climate change." Your letter contained a series of charts (from NOAA's *State of the*

⁶ Letter from Sen. Jeff Sessions to EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson dated December 4, 2012.

Climate in 2009 report) related to land surface air temperatures, sea surface temperatures, marine air temperatures, tropospheric temperatures, and stratospheric temperatures. Importantly, while you did not provide the requested chart comparing global temperature averages that correlate to the global temperature averages predicted by the IPCC, the charts you provided are, nonetheless, intriguing because all of these charts show no increases in temperatures for at least the past decade.

Your lack of responsiveness on these points was raised at your April 11, 2013, confirmation hearing when Senator Sessions presented the following chart demonstrating that global temperatures have not increased over the last decade and certainly not to the extent predicted by the climate models:



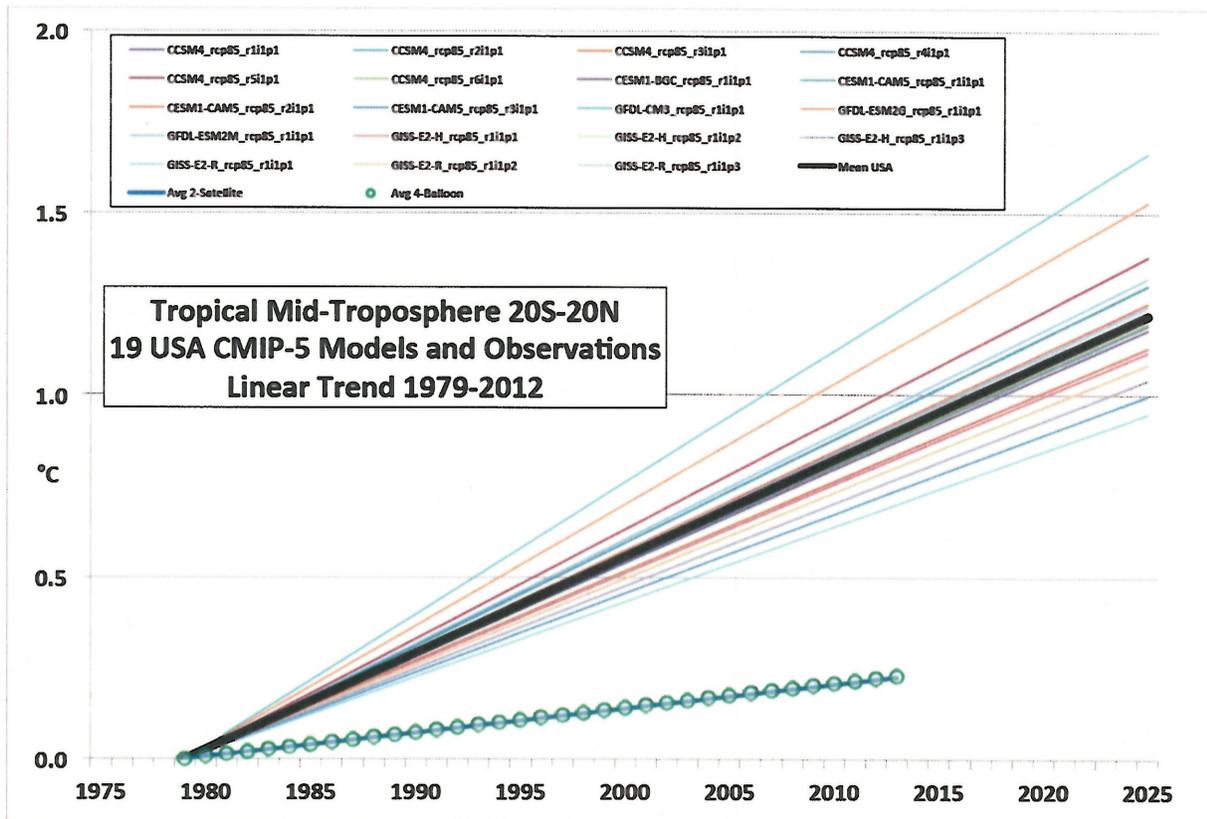
At the hearing, you agreed to look into this issue further.⁷ Also, in his questions for the record, Senator Sessions asked you again: “Will you provide me with data showing actual global average temperatures since 1979 versus IPCC predictions, as was requested in my letter?”

On April 30, 2013, you responded to Senator Sessions. Yet, instead of providing the requested analysis including a chart showing official predictions versus actual global temperatures, you simply stated that “EPA has not produced its own analysis, but we expect a definitive comparison in the forthcoming [International Panel on Climate Change] Fifth Assessment Report.” This is unacceptable. Unlike EPA, the IPCC is an international body

⁷ Confirmation Hearing Transcript at pg. 134.

outside the jurisdiction and control of the United States Congress. Moreover, EPA is the entity of the U.S. government that is seeking to regulate virtually all economic activities on the basis that greenhouse gases are causing temperatures to increase to the extent previously predicted by the IPCC.

It was equally unacceptable for you to answer congressional requests for EPA data by referring members, as you did, to a short paper (Rahmstorf et al. 2012)⁸ published in an on-line journal where the editor-in-chief is also the “coordinating lead author”⁹ for the IPCC—the same IPCC that published the climate models that vastly over-predicted actual global temperature increases. In light of the actual temperature data, we find it remarkable that EPA would—without conducting its own analysis—endorse that paper’s dubious finding that “global temperature continues to increase in good agreement with the best estimates of the IPCC”—a view that appears to be contrary to the actual data and facts. This is shown by a comprehensive comparison of climate models used by the IPCC, which is reflected in the following chart:¹⁰



⁸ <http://iopscience.iop.org/1748-9326/7/4/044035/article>. It is also noteworthy that this paper was published on November 27, 2012—almost two weeks *after* the President stated that “the temperature around the globe is increasing faster than was predicted even 10 years ago.”

⁹ <http://kammen.berkeley.edu/>

¹⁰ Prepared by Dr. John Christy, Distinguished Professor, Atmospheric Science, University of Alabama in Huntsville.

As you recently acknowledged, “sound science and transparency” are among “EPA’s core values” that must “guide all EPA action.”¹¹ We agree, and as Members of the Senate Committee with oversight responsibility for these matters, we are perplexed that EPA would refuse to be transparent in this instance and would refuse to follow sound science by not already completing this simple comparative analysis. The American public should be deeply troubled to learn that EPA is actively working to increase energy prices based on predicted global temperature increases without, first, undertaking efforts to determine if temperatures are actually increasing to the extent predicted by the climate models. This refusal to provide reasonable data requested by Members of Congress comes on the heels of a report by your Inspector General highly critical of EPA’s review of external data for the endangerment finding.¹²

Astoundingly, the President repeated his incorrect assertion again on May 29, 2013, when he stated, “We also know that the climate is warming faster than anybody anticipated five or 10 years ago.”¹³ The President’s assertions appear to have been made in concert with the efforts of affiliated groups who are supporting the Administration’s efforts to impose expensive new mandates on American energy production and use. For instance, *Huffington Post* recently reported:

Organizing for Action, the advocacy arm pushing the Obama administration's agenda, will begin its next big policy push on Thursday with a focus on climate change. The group, which was formed using the 2012 Obama campaign's machinery, will begin what organizers view as a potential multi-year effort to lay the groundwork for legislative action on climate change.¹⁴

Last week, it was widely reported that the President is preparing to announce a series of enormously expensive new regulations and executive actions aimed at addressing concerns with rising global temperatures, including greenhouse gas emission limitations for existing power plants. According to the *New York Times*, “administration officials signaled that Mr. Obama had decided the risks from climate change outweighed the potential economic and political costs from taking steps to address it.”¹⁵ We are alarmed that such an effort would be undertaken when the executive branch will not provide relevant information in an open and transparent manner. The Agency’s actions must use only the best available science and any efforts must reflect actual, verified data and be based on proven models shown to produce sound predictions.

Accordingly, we would respectfully ask you to provide within 30 days of the date of this letter the supporting data and analysis relied upon by the President showing actual global average temperatures since 1979 versus IPCC predictions, as was requested in Senator Sessions’ December 2012 letter and again during your nomination hearing to lead the Agency. This should include an EPA-produced chart comparing actual global average temperature increases since 1979 (when satellite temperature data became available) versus the latest IPCC predictions.

¹¹ McCarthy Response to Sessions QFR #7.

¹² EPA Office of Inspector General, *Procedural Review of EPA’s Greenhouse Gases Endangerment Finding Data Quality Processes* (Sept. 26, 2011), available at <http://www.epa.gov/oig/reports/2011/20110926-11-P-0702.pdf>.

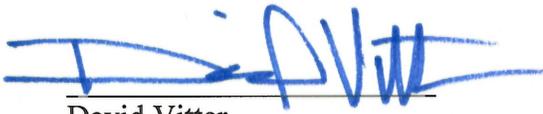
¹³ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/05/30/remarks-president-dccc-event>

¹⁴ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/25/ofa-climate-change_n_3150383.html?1366884102

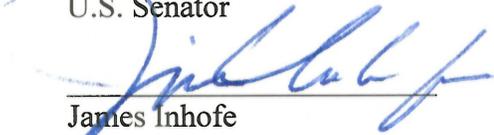
¹⁵ http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/20/science/earth/obama-preparing-big-effort-to-curb-climate-change.html?hp&_r=0

Your prompt attention to this important matter is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



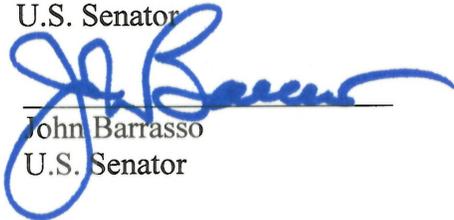
David Vitter
U.S. Senator



James Inhofe
U.S. Senator



Deb Fischer
U.S. Senator



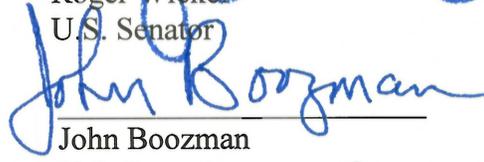
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U.S. Senator



Jeff Sessions
U.S. Senator



Roger Wicker
U.S. Senator



John Boozman
U.S. Senator



Mike Crapo
U.S. Senator