



Climate Science Manipulation Alleged

By H. JOSEF HEBERT – Dec 10, 2007

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House has systematically tried to manipulate climate change science and minimize the dangers of global warming, asserts a Democratic congressional report issued after a 16-month investigation.

Republicans called the report, issued Monday by Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Calif., a "partisan diatribe" against the Bush administration.

The report relies on hundreds of internal communications and documents as well as testimony at two congressional hearings to outline a pattern where scientists and government reports were edited to emphasize the uncertainties surrounding global warming, according to Waxman.

Many of the allegations of interference dating back to 2002 have surfaced previously, although the report by the Democratic majority of the House Oversight and Reform Committee sought to show a pattern of conduct.

"The Bush administration has engaged in a systematic effort to manipulate climate change science and mislead policymakers and the public about the dangers of global warming," the report concludes.

It said the White House over the years has sought to control public access to government climate scientists, suppressed scientific views that conflicted with administration policy and extensively edited government reports "to minimize the significance of climate change."

The White House called the findings "rehash and recycled rhetoric" that has been addressed by administration officials in the past. "It's a thinly veiled attempt to distract attention from the administration's efforts ... at the Bali summit," said White House spokeswoman Emily Lawrimore.

The report was issued as government officials from across the globe were meeting in Bali, Indonesia, to map out a strategy for dealing with climate change after 2012 when the Kyoto Protocol on climate expires. The United States is a participant.

Rep. Tom Davis of Virginia, the ranking Republican on the House committee, issued his own report disputing the Democrats' conclusions.

The Democrats "grossly exaggerated" claims of political interference and ignored "the legitimate role of policymakers, instead of scientists, in making administration policy," said the GOP rebuttal. It said requests to the media about science were referred to scientists.

Among the findings cited by the Democrats:

_ The White House Council on Environmental Quality, or CEQ, made 294 edits to the administration's 2003 strategic plan for its climate change science program. It said the changes were to either emphasize uncertainties or diminish the importance of the human role in global warming.

_ Media requests for interviews with climate scientists were routinely routed through the CEQ, which often sought to make available scientists whose views were more aligned with administration policy.

_ Climate scientists' testimony before Congress was often heavily edited by political appointees. In cases cited in the report scientists were persuaded to play down the human influence on climate change and — in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina — the link between climate change and hurricanes.

James Connaughton, the CEQ chairman, rejected suggestions that science was being ignored or suppressed.

"This administration has an unparalleled record of supporting funding, advancing and publicizing climate change research," said Connaughton in a statement. "Claims that this administration interfered with scientists and with the science are false."

He said that nearly \$12 billion has been devoted to advance climate change science since 2001 and that peer reviewed findings by U.S. government scientists have been a prominent part of assessments issued by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the group of international scientists spearheading research into global warming.

On the Net

House Oversight and Government Reform Committee: <http://oversight.house.gov/>

White House Council on Environmental Quality: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/ceq/>

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