

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS  
**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE  
2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

Majority (202) 225-2927  
Minority (202) 225-3641

**Opening Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman**  
**Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce**  
**Briefing on Undeniable Data: The Latest Research on**  
**Global Temperature and Climate Science**  
**November 14, 2011**

Climate change is the defining environmental challenge of our time. We know greenhouse gases in the atmosphere heat the planet, and we know humans are releasing large quantities of greenhouse gases, which are accumulating in the atmosphere and the oceans. The best scientific information available tells us that the planet is in fact warming, and as warming continues, floods, wildfires, heat waves, and extreme weather will increase and intensify. The threatened damage and costs are enormous.

While some nations have started to address greenhouse gas emissions, far more is needed – especially in the United States – to slow global warming. If we fail to act, future generations will never understand why we squandered our shrinking opportunity to protect the planet.

The basic foundation for action is an acknowledgement that there is a problem that must be solved. We cannot effectively meet this challenge unless we understand and accept the best scientific information.

During this Congress, the Republican-controlled House has taken the opposite approach. The House has voted 21 times to block actions to address climate change. One of these was a vote to deny that “climate change is occurring, is caused largely by human activities, and poses significant risks for public health and welfare.”

History will look back on this science denial with profound regret.

According to the eminent scientific journal *Nature*, members of the Energy and Commerce Committee have taken positions on climate change that are [quote] “fundamentally anti-science” and the result of [quote] “willful ignorance,” making it [quote] “hard to escape the conclusion that the U.S. Congress has entered the intellectual wilderness.”

Democrats on the Energy and Commerce Committee have repeatedly sought hearings on climate science so that we can formulate a policy based on the science. Two weeks ago, we

asked for a hearing on the latest science regarding the agricultural impacts of climate change. We received no response. Last week, we requested a hearing with Dr. Muller, who is with us here today. We didn't get a response to that request either.

When a prominent climate skeptic publishes a study determining that "global warming is real," that is information that members of Congress need to hear.

As we will hear today, Dr. Muller's analysis examined more than 1.6 billion temperature measurements to determine if climate change is occurring. Climate deniers have challenged the existence of climate change by alleging that the vast amount of scientific data showing the warming of the planet is biased. This new assessment addresses this criticism.

The study analyzed the surface temperature record by using over 39,000 unique monitoring stations, more than five times the number of stations used by other scientists.

Dr. Muller's study confirms the previous findings by NOAA, NASA, and others that the earth is warming.

A common refrain I hear on the Energy and Commerce Committee is that the science is "not settled." But at the same time that Committee Republicans argue that the science is unresolved, they have rejected multiple requests to bring scientists before the Committee to educate members. They and their colleagues have also voted to slash funding for climate science research and to eliminate NASA's earth monitoring activities.

It is appropriate to raise questions if you are willing to hear the answers. But House Republicans have voted to halt scientific research and they refuse to hear from scientists at our nation's leading research institutions or the National Academy of Sciences.

According to the International Energy Agency's recently issued World Energy Outlook, we may have as little as five years to act if we are going to avoid crossing the point where potentially devastating climate change becomes irreversible. Significant emissions are already locked in by our existing infrastructure.

Every year of delay means that the costs will be greater when we do take action.

According to the International Energy Agency, for every \$1 of investment avoided in the power sector before 2020, over \$4 would need to be spent after 2020 to compensate for the increased emissions.

So this is a timely briefing. It's important for members to understand the state of the science so that we can craft science-based policies to address climate change.