

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

Majority (202) 225-2927  
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October 28, 2011

The Honorable Fred Upton  
Chairman  
Energy and Commerce Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Ed Whitfield  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Energy and Power  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Upton and Chairman Whitfield:

We are writing to request that you hold a hearing on climate change science to examine an important new analysis by the Berkeley Earth Surface Temperature Project.<sup>1</sup> This analysis, led by Richard Muller, a prominent climate skeptic, examined more than 1.6 billion temperature measurements to determine if climate change is occurring. As Mr. Muller wrote in the *Wall Street Journal*, his team found that “global warming is real.”<sup>2</sup>

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 by the Berkeley Earth Surface Temperature Project 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. Mr. Muller’s team found that rising temperatures could not be explained away by an urban “heat island” effect because it does not

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<sup>1</sup> Berkeley Earth Surface Temperature, *A New Assessment of Global Warming* (2011) (online at <http://berkeleyearth.org/study.php>).

<sup>2</sup> The Case Against Global-Warming Skepticism, *The Wall Street Journal* (Oct. 21, 2011) (online at <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204422404576594872796327348.html>).

contribute significantly to the average land temperature rise.<sup>3</sup> His team found that there are twice as many monitoring stations that recorded warming as cooling, a sure sign of global warming. And his team found that high-quality and poor-quality monitoring stations both reported similar warming trends, disputing the idea that warming trends could be attributed to the inclusion of data from unreliable monitors.<sup>4</sup>

It is important for our Committee to hear from Mr. Muller because more than half the members of the Committee reject the scientific finding that climate change is occurring. At the Subcommittee's first hearing on the subject of climate change, Senator James Inhofe told the Subcommittee that he believes climate change is a "hoax."<sup>5</sup> At a subcommittee mark-up on a bill to block EPA from regulating pollutants that cause climate change, Chairman Emeritus Joe Barton stated, "the science is not settled and the science is actually going the other way." Another Republican member, Rep. Steve Scalise, asserted that that "the science is not settled."<sup>6</sup> Rep. Michael Burgess of our Committee has said, "My opinion, for what it's worth, is the science behind global temperature is not settled."<sup>7</sup> When Rep. Waxman offered an amendment on the House floor that affirmed that "climate change is occurring, is caused largely by human activities, and poses significant risks for public health and welfare," every Republican member of the Committee – and all but one of the Republican member of the House – voted to reject this scientific finding.<sup>8</sup>

According to the eminent scientific journal *Nature*, members of our Committee have taken positions on climate change that are "fundamentally anti-science" and the result of "willful ignorance," making it "hard to escape the conclusion that the U.S. Congress has entered the intellectual wilderness."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Berkeley Earth Surface Temperature, *Influence of Urban Heating on the Global Temperature Land Average Using Rural Sites Identified from MODIS Classifications* (Oct. 2011) (online at <http://berkeleyearth.org/resources.php>).

<sup>4</sup> The Case Against Global-Warming Skepticism, *The Wall Street Journal* (Oct. 21, 2011) (online at <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204422404576594872796327348.html>).

<sup>5</sup> House Subcommittee on Energy and Power, *Hearing on H.R. 910, The Energy Tax Prevention Act of 2011*, 112th Cong. (Feb. 9, 2011).

<sup>6</sup> House Committee on Energy and Commerce, *Markup on H.R. 910, The Energy Tax Prevention Act of 2011*, 112th Cong. (Mar. 15, 2011).

<sup>7</sup> Statement of Congressman Michael Burgess, *Climate Science and EPA's Greenhouse Gas Regulations*, Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Energy and Power, Committee on Energy and Commerce, U.S. House of Representatives, 112th Cong. (Mar. 8, 2011).

<sup>8</sup> U.S. House of Representatives, Roll Call Vote on Agreeing to the Waxman of California Amendment No. 6 for H.R. 910, (Apr. 6, 2011) (184 yeas, 240 nays).

<sup>9</sup> *Into Ignorance: Vote to overturn an aspect of climate science marks a worrying trend in US Congress*, *Nature* (Mar. 16, 2011) (online at <http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v471/n7338/full/471265b.html>).

The threat from climate change is too grave to allow partisan ideology to trump science. Over the past year, we have experienced some of the worst weather in our history, with economic losses over \$35 billion.<sup>10</sup> The record snowfall known as the Groundhog Day Blizzard in the Upper Midwest resulted in 36 deaths and over \$1.8 billion in total losses.<sup>11</sup> When the snow melted, the Mississippi River and tributaries reached record crests, flooding huge swaths of Missouri, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, and Louisiana and causing billions in damage to farmland, homes, and infrastructure.<sup>12</sup> Hot and dry conditions have helped wildfires burn their way across the Southwest. The wildfires in Texas this year have been among the worst in the state's history, burning more than a million acres.<sup>13</sup> One historic dust storm in Phoenix was one mile high, 100 miles wide, and ran for 150 miles before dissipating.<sup>14</sup> These are exactly the kinds of extreme weather conditions that scientists have been warning will become more frequent and more severe as the planet warms.

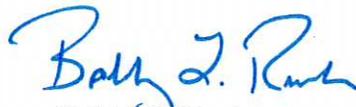
Climate denial is perilous. That is why we urge you to hold hearings on the important work of Mr. Muller and his team. Such a hearing would help members understand the urgent need for action and the serious consequences of inaction. It could also help lay the foundation for constructive work in the Committee on this critical threat.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Henry A. Waxman  
Ranking Member



Bobby L. Rush  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Energy and Power

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<sup>10</sup> National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, *NOAA's National Weather Service taking action to build a 'Weather-ready' nation* (Aug. 17, 2011) (online at [http://www.noaa.gov/news/stories/2011/20110817\\_weatherready.html](http://www.noaa.gov/news/stories/2011/20110817_weatherready.html)).

<sup>11</sup> National Climatic Data Center, *Billion Dollar U.S. Weather/Climate Disasters* (June 17, 2011) (online at <http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/oa/reports/billionz.html>).

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*

<sup>13</sup> National Climatic Data Center, *State of the Climate: Wildfires* (Oct. 7, 2011) (online at <http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/sotc/fire>).

<sup>14</sup> National Weather Service Forecast Office, *Major Dust Storm Moves Through Arizona* (Jul. 7, 2011) (online at <http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/psr/pns/2011/July/DustStorm.php>).