

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
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November 19, 2012

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

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

Dear Chairman Upton and Chairman Whitfield:

The World Bank recently released a new report, "Turn Down the Heat: Why a 4°C Warmer World Must be Avoided."¹ We are writing to request that the Committee hold a hearing on this important new report.

This report helps us understand what the world would be like if it warmed by 4 degrees Celsius before the end of the century. The impacts would be devastating. The report describes the flooding of coastal cities; increasing risks for our food supply; unprecedented heat waves in many regions; exacerbated water scarcity in many regions; increased frequency of high-intensity tropical cyclones; and irreversible loss of biodiversity, including coral reef systems. According to the report, this temperature increase would result in a world so different from the current one that we may be unable to anticipate and plan for our adaptation needs.

¹ World Bank, *Turn Down the Heat: Why a 4°C Warmer World Must be Avoided*, (November 2012)(online at http://climatechange.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/Turn_Down_the_heat_Why_a_4_degree_centrigrade_warmer_world_must_be_avoided.pdf).

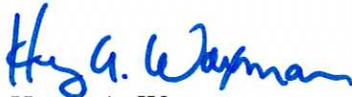
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The report explains that a “temperature increase of 4°C approaches the difference between temperatures today and those of the last ice age, when much of central Europe and the northern United States were covered with kilometers of ice.”² According to the World Bank, “Recent extreme heat waves such as in Russia in 2010 are likely to become the new normal summer in a 4°C world.”³ The projected increases in ocean acidity “appear to be unparalleled in Earth’s history.”⁴ Moreover, the impacts of climate change on agricultural production are expected to be so severe in some developing countries that they will substantially increase childhood malnutrition and stunted growth.

These are not hypothetical risks. The World Bank finds that even if all current mitigation pledges are kept, “the world is likely to warm by more than 3°C” by the end of the century. If these commitments are not kept, a warming of 4°C “could occur as early as the 2060s.”⁵

This is an alarming and sobering report from an organization not known for its environmental activism. As we develop our energy agenda for the next Congress, members of the Committee should have the opportunity to examine the latest information about climate change and the very serious global consequences of inaction. We urge you to schedule a hearing in the near future to examine this critically important issue.

Sincerely,



Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Member



Bobby L. Rush
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy
and Power

² *Id.* at xiv.

³ *Id.* at xv.

⁴ *Id.* at xv.

⁵ *Id.* at xiii.