FRED UPTON, MICHIGAN
CHAIRMAN

HENRY A. WAXMAN, CALIFORNIA
RANKING MEMBER

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

February 22, 2012

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 urge you to hold a hearing on new data released by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) showing that this winter has been much warmer than average, consistent with overall rising temperatures on a global scale.

In January, the average temperature in the contiguous United States was 5.5 degrees above normal, making it the fourth warmest January on record.[1] So far, the first two months of winter have been the fourth warmest on record, with 22 states experiencing temperatures among their ten warmest.[2] The Northern Plains in particular has experienced warmer-than-normal temperatures. Temperatures in Minnesota were 10.1 degrees above average in December and January, the warmest such period on record.[3] On January 5, the temperature reached 61 degrees in Minot, North Dakota, and 71 degrees in Jackson County, South Dakota.[4]

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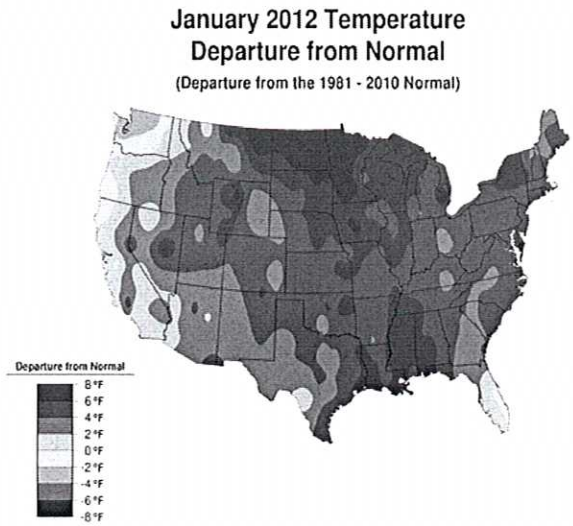
[1] National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Climatic Data Center, *State of the Climate, National Overview, January 2012* (online at www.ncdc.noaa.gov/sotc/national/).
[2] *Id.*
[3] *Id.*
[4] National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Climatic Data Center, *State of the Climate, National Overview, January 2012* (online at www.ncdc.noaa.gov/sotc/national/) (accessed Feb. 9, 2012).



Source: NOAA

These above-normal temperatures are part of a global trend. All eleven years in the 21st century so far (2001–2011) rank among the 13 warmest since record-keeping began in 1880.[5]

Denial of basic science is a serious obstacle for action to understand and address global climate change. Yet last year during debate on H.R. 910, all Republican members of the Committee voted against a simple amendment that recognized that warming of the climate is occurring. We therefore request that you convene a hearing to discuss the latest temperature trends to provide members with a more robust understanding of the scientific consensus around rising temperatures.

Sincerely,

Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Member

Bobby L. Rush
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy and Power

[5] National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Climatic Data Center, *State of the Climate, Global Analysis, Annual 2011* (online at www.ncdc.noaa.gov/sotc/global/2011/13) (accessed Feb. 9, 2012).