NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES

Office of the President

July 15, 2005

The Honorable Joe Barton
The Honorable Ed Whitfield
US House of Representatives

Dear Congressmen Barton and Whitfield:

I am writing in response to the June 23 letter that you sent to three scientists (Drs. Michael Mann, Malcolm Hughes, and Raymond Bradley) with the request to provide very detailed information and answer questions related to their research on climate change (e.g., "location of all data archives relating to each published study," "did you calculate the R^2 statistic for the temperature reconstruction, particularly for the 15th Century proxy record calculations...," etc.).

Subsequently I have been contacted by members of the National Academy of Sciences, including members of my Council, officers of various science organizations, and distinguished scientists in fields other than climate research, expressing considerable concern regarding your letter. A Congressional investigation, based on the authority of the House Commerce Committee is probably not the best way to resolve a scientific issue, and a focus on individual scientists can be intimidating.

If the House Commerce Committee would like to have additional information regarding the state of scientific knowledge in the area of research being conducted by Drs. Mann, Hughes, and Bradley, the National Academy of Sciences would be willing to create an independent expert panel (according to our standard rigorous study process) to assess the state of scientific knowledge in this area, or perhaps one of the professional scientific societies could take on this task for you.

Please let us know if we can help.

Sincerely,

Ralph J. Cicerone
President

Cc: The Honorable John Dingell
The Honorable Bart Stupak
The Honorable Henry Waxman

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