



AMERICAN METEOROLOGICAL SOCIETY

45 BEACON STREET, BOSTON, MA 02108-3693 U.S.A.

TEL: 617-227-2425
FAX: 617-742-8718
E-MAIL: amsinfo@ametsoc.org
WEB: www.ametsoc.org

KEITH L. SEITTER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
E-MAIL: kseitter@ametsoc.org

27 February 2015

The Honorable Raúl M. Grijalva
Minority Leader
Committee on Natural Resources
U. S. House of Representatives
329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Grijalva:

Science and jurisprudence have in common the practice of the careful and critical evaluation of ideas, facts, assertions, and conclusions. The remarkable and time tested results apparent to all rely on guidelines for the practice of research, of argument, of evidence, and of integrity that are clear and clearly honored. It is in this spirit that the American Meteorological Society (AMS) is strongly committed to academic freedom, open scientific debate, and free expression of scientific ideas (see, for example, the AMS Statement on Freedom of Scientific Expression: http://www.ametsoc.org/policy/2012statement_freedom.html). The AMS is also deeply committed to transparency in science, the free availability of scientific data and academic research products, and full disclosure of funding sources and potential conflicts of interest (see, for example, the obligations of authors wishing to publish their results in AMS scientific journals: www.ametsoc.org/PUBSAuthorObligations).

Despite its commitment to transparency and full disclosure within the scientific process, the AMS is concerned by the “Letters to Seven Universities Asking for Documents on Climate Change Research” (<http://democrats.naturalresources.house.gov/documents/letters-seven-universities-asking-documents-climate-change-research>) posted on the Committee website on 24 February. Publicly singling out specific researchers based on perspectives they have expressed and implying a failure to appropriately disclose funding sources — and thereby questioning their scientific integrity — sends a chilling message to all academic researchers. Further, requesting copies of the researcher’s communications related to external funding opportunities or the preparation of testimony impinges on the free pursuit of ideas that is central to the concept of academic freedom.

The AMS maintains that peer-review is the appropriate mechanism to assess the validity and quality of scientific research, regardless of the funding sources supporting that research as long as those funding sources and any potential conflicts of interest are fully disclosed. The scientific process that includes testing and validation of concepts and ideas — discarding those that cannot successfully withstand such testing — is chronicled in the peer-reviewed scientific literature. We encourage the Committee to rely on the full corpus of peer-reviewed literature on climate science as the most reliable source for knowledge and understanding that can be applied to the policy options before you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Keith L. Seitter
AMS Executive Director

CC: Presidents Patrick Harker, University of Delaware; Robert Altenkirch, University of Alabama in Huntsville; George Peterson, Georgia Institute of Technology; L. Rafael Reif, MIT; Michael Crow, Arizona State University; Bruce Benson, University of Colorado; Andrew K. Benton, Pepperdine University