

April 23, 2015

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Majority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Minority Whip, U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steve Scalise
Majority Whip, U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker, Leader Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Whip Scalise, and Whip Hoyer,

The federal government relies on the best available science to inform policy decisions and act in the country's interests on a broad array of topics, including infectious diseases, food safety, and national security. In the second session of the 113th Congress, the House of Representatives approved several bills containing provisions and report language blocking federal agencies from contributing to or accessing the current scientific understanding of climate change. These provisions impair our nation's ability to effectively plan for the future. In the 114th Congress, we ask you to reject any efforts to place similar constraints on departments and federal agencies regarding climate-related planning.

As an example of a concerning provision, the following language was inserted into H.R. 4870, the House Defense Appropriations Bill:

None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to design, implement, administer, or carry out the U.S. Global Climate Research Program National Climate Assessment, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Fifth Assessment Report....

Similar language was inserted into the House Commerce, Justice, and Science and the Energy and Water appropriations bills and the annual defense authorization bill.

Allowing federal agencies to access all the available science is critical to ensuring the optimal policy outcome for the United States. To forbid such access would be a disservice to the American people. Full access to scientific research is especially critical for climate change because there is strong evidence that ongoing climate change is and will continue to broadly affect society—including our economy, security, health, agriculture, and environment.

Constraining the government's ability to consider the range of possible and probable future climates would not be prudent, and will likely lead to greater tax payer expense in the future. For example, the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review makes clear the potential impacts of climate change to Pentagon planning: "The impacts of climate change may increase the frequency, scale, and complexity of future missions ... while at the same time undermining the capacity of our domestic installations." Billions of dollars are at stake in Department of Defense and other agency decisions on where to site, build, and refurbish bases and other facilities, often in low-lying areas along the coasts.

Consideration of the science pertaining to an issue has repeatedly served America well. To conclude, we urge you to ensure the federal government has full access to scientific research as it addresses the great challenges we will face in this century and those that follow.

American Association for the Advancement of Science
American Chemical Society
American Geophysical Union
American Society of Agronomy
American Society of Plant Biologists
American Statistical Association
Crop Science Society of America
Ecological Society of America
Geological Society of America
Society for Conservation Biology
Soil Science Society of America

CC: Congressman Scott Perry; Congressman David McKinley; Congressman Paul Gosar

NB: An identical letters was sent to leadership for the Appropriations committee and four of its subcommittees, the Armed Services Committee, and the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee.