

June 23, 2005

Dr. Rajendra K. Pachauri
Chairman
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
C/O IPCC Secretariat
World Meteorological Organization
7 bis Avenue de La Paix
C.P. 2300
Ch- 1211 Geneva 2 Switzerland

Dear Chairman Pachauri:

Questions have been raised, according to a February 14, 2005 article in *The Wall Street Journal*, about the significance of methodological flaws and data errors in studies by Dr. Michael Mann and co-authors of the historical record of temperatures and climate change. We understand that these studies of temperature proxies (tree rings, ice cores, corals, etc.) formed the basis for a new finding in the 2001 United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Third Assessment Report (TAR). This finding – that the increase in 20th century northern hemisphere temperatures is “likely to have been the largest of any century during the past 1,000 years” and that the “1990s was the warmest decade and 1998 the warmest year” – has since been referenced widely and has become a prominent feature of the public debate surrounding climate change policy.

However, in recent peer-reviewed articles in *Science*, *Geophysical Research Letters*, *Energy & Environment*, among others, researchers question the results of this work. As these researchers find, based on the available information, the conclusions concerning temperature histories – and hence whether warming in the 20th century is actually unprecedented – cannot be supported by the Mann *et. al.* studies. In addition, we understand from the February 14 *Journal* and these other reports that researchers have failed to replicate the findings of these studies, in part because of problems with the underlying data and the calculations used to reach the conclusions. Questions have also been raised concerning the sharing and dissemination of the data and methods used to perform the studies. For example, according to the January 2005 *Energy & Environment*, the information necessary to replicate the analyses in the studies has not been made fully available to researchers upon request.

The concerns surrounding these studies reflect upon the quality and transparency of federally funded research and of the IPCC review process – two matters of particular interest to the Committee. For example, one concern relates to whether IPCC review has been sufficiently robust and independent. We understand that Dr. Michael Mann, the lead author of the studies in question, was also a lead author of the IPCC chapter that assessed and reported this very same work, and that two co-authors of the studies were also contributing authors to the same chapter. Given the prominence these studies were accorded in the IPCC TAR, we seek to learn more about the facts and circumstances that led to acceptance and prominent use of this work in the IPCC TAR and to understand what this controversy indicates about the data quality of key IPCC studies.

In light of the Committee's jurisdiction over energy policy and certain environmental issues in the U.S. House of Representatives, the Committee must have full and accurate information when considering matters relating to climate change policy. We open this review because the dispute surrounding these studies bears directly on important questions about the federally funded work upon which climate studies rely and the quality and transparency of analyses used to support the IPCC assessment process. With the IPCC currently working to produce a fourth assessment report, addressing questions of quality and transparency in the underlying analyses supporting that assessment, both scientific and economic, are of utmost importance if Congress is eventually going to make policy decisions drawing from this work.

To assist us as we begin this review, and pursuant to Rules X and XI of the U.S. House of Representatives, please provide the following information requested below on or before July 11, 2005:

1. Explain the IPCC process for preparing and writing its assessment reports, including, but not limited to: (a) how referenced studies are reviewed and assessed by the relevant Working Group; (b) the steps taken by lead authors, reviewers, and others to ensure the data underlying the studies forming the basis for key findings – particularly proxy and temperature data – are accurate and up to date; and (c) the IPCC requirements governing the quality of data used in reports.
2. What specifically did IPCC do to check the quality of the Mann et. al. studies and underlying data, cited in the TAR? Did IPCC seek to ensure the studies could be replicated?
3. What is your position with regard to: (a) the recent challenges to the quality of the Mann et. al. data, (b) related questions surrounding the sharing of methods and research for others to test the validity of these studies, and (c) what this controversy indicates about the data quality of key IPCC studies?
4. What did IPCC do to ensure the quality of data for other prominent historical temperature or proxy studies cited in the IPCC, including the Folland et. al. and Jones et. al. studies that were sources for the graphic accompanying the Mann et. al. graphic in the Summary for Policy Makers? Are the data and methodologies for such works complete and available for other researchers to test and replicate?

5. Explain (a) the facts and circumstances by which Dr. Michael Mann served as a lead author of the very chapter that prominently featured his work and (b) by which his work became a finding and graphical feature of the TAR Summary for Policymakers.
6. Explain (a) how IPCC ensures objectivity and independence among section contributors and reviewers, (b) how they are chosen, and (c) how the chapters, summaries, and the full report are approved and what any such approval signifies about the quality and acceptance of particular research therein.
7. Identify the people who wrote and reviewed the historical temperature-record portions of the TAR, particularly Section 2.3, "Is the Recent Warming Unusual?" and explain all their roles in the preparation of the TAR, including, but not limited to, the specific roles in the writing and review process.
8. Given the questions about Mann et. al. data, has the Working Group I or the IPCC made any changes to specific procedures or policies, including policies for checking the quality of data, for the forthcoming Fourth Assessment Report? If so, explain in detail any such changes, and why they were made.
9. Does the IPCC or Working Group I have policies or procedures regarding the disclosure and dissemination of scientific data referenced in the reports? If so, explain in detail any such policies and what happens when they are violated.

Thank you for your assistance. If you have any questions, please contact Peter Spencer of the Majority Committee staff at (202) 226-2424.

Sincerely,

Joe Barton
Chairman

Ed Whitfield
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight
and Investigations

cc: The Honorable John Dingell, Ranking Member
The Honorable Bart Stupak, Ranking Member,
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations