

Congressman H. Morgan Griffith
9th District of Virginia
Written Testimony for the Record
State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations
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Thank you for holding this hearing today and providing me the opportunity to highlight matters of great importance to the country as you move forward in the appropriations process.

As you may know, the Green Climate Fund was announced at the 2009 Copenhagen Climate Conference in the so-called Copenhagen Accord, a non-legally binding, political document. In subsequent meetings of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the UNFCCC established the fund with headquarters in Songdo, South Korea and the Fund became operational in 2014. In terms of funding, the Copenhagen Accord stated that the Fund would have “a goal of mobilizing jointly USD 100 billion a year by 2020 to address the needs of developing countries.” The Green Climate Fund’s Executive Director stated in 2015, however, that the estimated funding needed by developing countries would increase to \$450 billion per year after 2020. And the United Nations’ top climate change official, Christiana Figueres, has described the current goal of \$100 billion as “peanuts” and envisions trillions of dollars in spending over the next 15 years.

Congress has never authorized nor appropriated funding for the Green Climate Fund. Yet on November 15, 2014, President Obama pledged an initial \$3 billion from the United States during the G-20 meetings in Australia, and ultimately diverted \$1 billion in funding, appropriated for other programs, to the Green Climate Fund during his presidency.

In fact, just three days before President Trump’s inauguration, President Obama’s State Department cut a check for \$500 million as the second of two payments to the Green

Climate Fund. This funding was drawn from the FY16 Economic Support Fund appropriation, which was also the source of the first \$500 million payment in 2016. The payments are completely counter to Congressional intent and direction in the appropriation process.

The U.S. Government already supports significant climate change related spending, including technical and financial assistance for climate change activities in the developing world through a variety of bilateral and multilateral programs. We cannot continue to fund yet another climate finance program. Congress must instead address the most pressing priorities for the American people amidst serious fiscal constraints.

In 2015, I led a letter – with 110 Members signing on – opposing funding for President Obama’s initial request for the Green Climate Fund during FY16, and followed up with this Committee to reiterate this request for FY17. The FY16 enacted appropriations legislation did not provide funding for the Green Climate Fund, despite President Obama’s requests. However, neither the FY16 appropriations bills, nor the FY17 continuing resolutions, contained a rider prohibiting funds from being used for the Green Climate Fund – leaving an opening for the President to shift the funding from the Economic Support Fund appropriation.

I am appreciative that last year’s FY17 House Appropriations Committee-passed State and Foreign Appropriations bill did contain this rider language:

“Green climate fund prohibition.—None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act or prior Acts making appropriations for the Department of State, foreign operations, and related programs may be made available as a contribution, grant, or any other payment to the Green Climate Fund.”

On the contrary, however, the FY17 Senate Appropriations Committee-passed State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill would have actually appropriated \$263 million for the Green Climate Fund.

I ask that this Subcommittee and the full Appropriations Committee continue to reflect the will of the House, not only by providing no funds for the Green Climate Fund, but also including language to specifically prohibit any appropriated funds from being used for such payments. While I am hopeful that President Trump would not fund this program, particularly by circumventing the will of Congress and without specific appropriations, I believe it is important that Congress make this point clear.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify and I look forward to answering any questions you might have.