

OPENING STATEMENT  
**Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)**

House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology  
*“Climate Science: Assumptions, Policy Implications, and the Scientific Method”*  
March 29, 2017

Thank you Chairman Smith for calling today’s hearing on Climate Science. I also want to thank our witnesses for being here today.

I want to start off today by placing our current situation in some historical perspective. The existence of the “greenhouse effect” was first proposed in the early 1800’s. By the late 1800’s scientists began to theorize that increases in carbon dioxide in our atmosphere could lead to global warming. By 1960 scientists had shown that carbon dioxide was in fact increasing in the atmosphere and humans were at least in part responsible for the increase. Scientific evidence for human induced climate change rapidly increased throughout the 1970’s.

By 1982, even oil giant Exxon’s own scientists were reporting to management that climate change due to carbon dioxide emissions was likely to occur, and that the effects of this climate change could be catastrophic. Since the early 1980’s when Exxon internally acknowledged the reality of climate change, the scientific evidence confirming human caused climate change has piled up at an incredible rate. The current scientific consensus on human caused climate change is based on thousands of scientific studies conducted by thousands of scientists all across the globe.

What does that word – consensus- actually mean? It means the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the IPCC, which is composed of scientists from around the world, has concluded that “warming of the climate system is unequivocal,” and that “it is extremely likely that human influence was the dominant cause of global warming.” The IPCC is not alone. The National Academies of Sciences has reached the same conclusion. In fact, the national academies of sciences in virtually every major country on Earth has endorsed the IPCC’s central conclusions on climate change. Most relevant scientific societies, including AAAS, the American Physical Society, the American Geophysical Union, the American Meteorological Society, and a host of others have also affirmed the overwhelming scientific evidence for human caused climate change.

Unfortunately, the long established scientific understanding of the reality of climate change ends at the doorstep of the Republican National Committee. Republicans in Congress overwhelmingly reject or minimize the scientific consensus on climate change. In this, they follow the leader of the Republican Party, President Trump, who once claimed that climate change was a hoax perpetrated by China. Even on this Committee on Science, Republican Members have postulated sometimes unique theories about climate change, some of which have become punchlines on late night television.

It saddens me that Majority Members of Congress and of this Committee in particular, consistently ignore the thousands of scientists around the world who maintain mainstream

climate science views, instead repeatedly calling a handful of preferred witnesses over and over again to testify. For instance, the three witnesses called by the Majority today have collectively appeared in front of Congress at least 20 times over the past decade.

Disturbingly, the Majority's unwillingness to accept the strong scientific consensus on climate change has led them to harass scientists who disagree with them. For example, the Majority on this Committee has issued subpoenas for the emails of climate scientists at NOAA- taking a page out of the playbook of fossil industry funded front groups who have harassed climate scientists across the country. In the process our Majority has brought condemnation upon this once great committee from across the scientific community.

Perhaps in retaliation for their inconvenient truths, climate scientists are now being targeted with massive budget cuts by Republicans in the White House and Congress. These cuts would devastate our ability to understand and mitigate the future effects of climate change. I sincerely hope that someday soon the Committee on Science will cease lecturing and harassing scientists, and instead return to listening to and supporting them. America will be far better off if we do.

I yield back.