



For Immediate Release  
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**Statement of Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas)  
Hearing on “Policy Relevant Climate Issues in Context”**

**Chairman Smith:** Climate change is an issue that needs to be discussed thoughtfully and objectively. Unfortunately, it’s sometimes surrounded by claims that conceal the facts and hinder the proper weighing of policy options.

I believe in the integrity of science. And I find it unfortunate that those who question certain scientific views on climate have their motives impugned. Challenging accepted beliefs through open debate and critical thinking is a primary part of the scientific process. To make a rational decision on climate change, we need to examine the relevant scientific issues along with the costs and benefits and better understand the uncertainties that surround both.

As we will hear today, there is still a great amount of uncertainty associated with our understanding of human influences on climate. A recent article in *The Economist* pointed out that climate models have greatly over-predicted warming. In fact, global temperatures have held steady over the past 15 years despite rising greenhouse gas emissions.

The magazine calls the lack of warming a “surprise.” It notes that the climate might be changing in ways not properly understood, which “could have profound significance for climate science and for environmental and social policy.”

This statement, from a respected publication that had previously supported aggressive emission limits, highlights the complexity of the climate issue. It calls attention to the limits of our understanding as to its causes. Indeed, there is much we don’t know. I am concerned that the Administration now seeks to lock in an inflexible regulatory framework based on a limited understanding of the challenge. I’m also concerned that these regulations may hinder economic development and our ability to deal with this and other challenges that lie before us.

Several federal government agencies now implement policies that drive up energy prices, burden employers and cost us jobs. But, many of these rules have no meaningful impact on climate change. For example, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has proposed standards that virtually prohibit new coal-fired power plants from being built. And regulations that affect existing power plants and refineries are soon to follow. Analyses of EPA’s regulatory options reveal that these regulations will significantly increase the price of electricity and gasoline.

At the same time, the Agency has stated that cutting U.S. emissions will have little or no effect on global greenhouse gas concentrations due to growing emissions in the developing world, particularly China and India. A recent Energy Information Administration report shows that U.S. reductions in emissions have little effect globally. It found that U.S. domestic carbon dioxide emissions decreased by 12 percent

between 2005 and 2012—more than any other nation. Global emissions actually increased by 15 percent over roughly the same period.

Affordable, reliable energy is key to a healthy economy. American consumers and small and large businesses all depend on reliable and affordable energy. It is only through sustained economic growth that we will be able to make the investments in research and technology necessary to fully understand and properly deal with problems like climate change. We should take a step back from the claims of impending catastrophe and think critically about what we know and what we don't know about this issue.

While it may require us to question some scientific views, that may be what is necessary for us to fully understand the science of climate change and determine a rational policy response.

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