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EPA Rejects Claims of Flawed Climate Science

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WASHINGTON – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) today denied 10 petitions challenging its 2009 determination that climate change is real, is occurring due to emissions of greenhouse gases from human activities, and threatens human health and the environment.

The petitions to reconsider EPA's Endangerment Finding claim that climate science cannot be trusted, and assert a conspiracy that invalidates the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, and the U.S. Global Change Research Program. After months of serious consideration of the petitions and of the state of climate change science, EPA finds no evidence to support these claims. In contrast, EPA's review shows that climate science is credible, compelling, and growing stronger.

"The endangerment finding is based on years of science from the U.S. and around the world. These petitions -- based as they are on selectively edited, out-of-context data and a manufactured controversy -- provide no evidence to undermine our determination. Excess greenhouse gases are a threat to our health and welfare," said EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson. "Defenders of the status quo will try to slow our efforts to get America running on clean energy. A better solution would be to join the vast majority of the American people who want to see more green jobs, more clean energy innovation and an end to the oil addiction that pollutes our planet and jeopardizes our national security."

The basic assertions by the petitioners and EPA responses follow.

Claim: Petitioners say that emails disclosed from the University of East Anglia's Climatic Research Unit provide evidence of a conspiracy to manipulate global temperature data.

Response: EPA reviewed every e-mail and found this was simply a candid discussion of scientists working through issues that arise in compiling and presenting large complex data sets. Four other independent reviews came to similar conclusions.

Claim: Petitioners say that errors in the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report call the entire body of work into question.

Response: Of the alleged errors, EPA confirmed only two in a 3,000 page report. The first pertains to the rate of Himalayan glacier melt and second to the percentage of the Netherlands below sea level. IPCC issued correction statements for both of these errors. The errors have no bearing on Administrator Jackson's decision. None of the errors undermines the basic facts that the climate is changing in ways that threaten our health and welfare.

Claim: Petitioners say that because certain studies were not included in the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report, the IPCC itself is biased and cannot be trusted as a source of reliable information.

Response: These claims are incorrect. In fact, the studies in question were included in the IPCC report, which provided a comprehensive and balanced discussion of climate science.

Claim: Petitioners say that new scientific studies refute evidence supporting the Endangerment Finding.

Response: Petitioners misinterpreted the results of these studies. Contrary to their claims, many of the papers they submit as evidence are consistent with EPA's Finding. Other studies submitted by the petitioners were based on unsound methodologies. Detailed discussion of these issues may be found in volume one of the response to petition documents, on EPA's website.

Climate change is already happening, and human activity is a contributor. The global warming trend over the past 100 years is confirmed by three separate records of surface temperature, all of which are confirmed by satellite data. Beyond this, evidence of climate change is seen in melting ice in the Arctic, melting glaciers around the world, increasing ocean

temperatures, rising sea levels, shifting precipitation patterns, and changing ecosystems and wildlife habitats.

“America’s Climate Choices,” a report from the National Academy of Sciences and the most recent assessment of the full body of scientific literature on climate change, along with the recently released “State of the Climate” report from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration both fully support the conclusion that climate change is real and poses significant risk to human and natural systems. The consistency among these and previously issued assessments only serves to strengthen EPA’s conclusion.

Information on EPA’s findings and the petitions: <http://epa.gov/climatechange/ endangerment/petitions.html>

More information on climate change: <http://epa.gov/climatechange>

Review America’s Climate Choices report: <http://americasclimatechoices.org/>

Review State of the Climate report:
http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2010/20100728_stateoftheclimate.html

Review information on Indicators of Climate Change: <http://epa.gov/climatechange/indicators.html>

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