

Washington, DC
18th March 2019

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N. W.
Washington, DC 20500
Via e-mail

Dear President Trump,

The undersigned organizations and individuals write to express our strong support for the proposed President's Commission on Climate Security. It is our understanding that this commission, which is being planned and would be directed by Dr. William Happer of the National Security Council staff, is currently being considered by your senior White House staff and relevant Cabinet secretaries and agency heads. The commission would consist of a small number of distinguished experts on climate-related science and national security. It would be charged with conducting an independent, high-level review of the Fourth National Climate Assessment and other official reports relating to climate and its implications for national security. Its deliberations would be subject to the transparency requirements of the Federal Advisory Committees Act.

In our view, an independent review of these reports is long overdue. Serious problems and shortcomings have been raised repeatedly in the past by highly-qualified scientists only to be ignored or dismissed by the federal agencies in charge of producing the reports. Among major issues that have been raised and that we hope the commission will scrutinize: the models used have assumed climate sensitivities to CO₂ concentrations significantly higher than recent research warrants; the models used have predicted much more warming than has actually occurred; predictions of the negative impacts of global warming have been made based on implausible high-end emissions scenarios; the positive impacts of warming have been ignored or minimized; and surface temperature data sets have been manipulated to show more rapid warming than has actually occurred. An underlying issue that we hope the commission will also address is the fact that so many of the scientific claims made in these reports and by many climate scientists are not falsifiable, that is, they cannot be tested by the scientific method.

The conclusions and predictions made by these reports are the basis for proposed energy policies that could cost trillions of dollars in less than a decade and tens of trillions of dollars over several decades. Given the magnitude of the potential costs involved, we think that taking the insular processes of official, consensus science on trust, as has been the case for the past three decades, is negligent and imprudent. In contrast, major engineering projects are regularly subjected to the most rigorous and exhaustive adversarial review. We suggest that climate science requires at least the same level of scrutiny as the engineering employed in building a bridge or a new airplane.

We note that defenders of the climate consensus have already mounted a public campaign against the proposed commission. We find this opposition curious. If the defenders are

confident that the science contained in official reports is robust, then they should welcome a review that would finally put to rest the doubts that have been raised. On the other hand, their opposition could be taken as evidence that the scientific basis of the climate consensus is in fact highly suspect and cannot withstand critical review.

We further note that opponents of the proposed commission have already stooped to making personal attacks on Dr. Happer. Many signers of this letter know Dr. Happer personally and all are familiar with his scientific career. We know him to be a man of high capabilities, high achievements, and the highest integrity.

It has been reported that some officials within your administration have proposed an internal working group as an alternative to an independent commission subject to FACA. Insofar as an internal working group would consist of federal career scientists reviewing their own work, we think this alternative would be worse than doing nothing. Although an independent commission of distinguished scientists would have high credibility, we do not mean to imply that its report should be the end of the matter. We therefore suggest that the National Academies of Science and Engineering would be appropriate bodies to conduct an initial review of the commission's report.

Mr. President, you have made a number of comments in recent years expressing doubts about the global warming consensus. Many of the signers of this letter have been similarly skeptical. Without prejudging the results, we think that a review of climate science produced by an independent, high-level commission would be a fair test for your views (and ours): either it would provide a sound basis for revising your views or it would confirm your views and confound your critics.

For these reasons, we urge you to create by Executive Order a President's Commission on Climate Security. Thank you for considering our views.