

19 February 2013

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
Co-Chair, Bicameral Task Force on Climate Change
Chairman, Subcommittee on Oversight, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works

The Honorable Henry Waxman
Co-Chair, Bicameral Task Force on Climate Change
Ranking Member, House Committee on Energy & Commerce

Dear Senator Whitehouse and Representative Waxman:

The American Geophysical Union (AGU) is honored to receive the request for input from the Bicameral Task Force on Climate Change. AGU asserts that humans impact climate, and the scientific community has the responsibility to communicate the implications of climate change in an effort to educate the public and policy makers. The Bicameral Task Force on Climate Change represents a critical step forward in improving our nation's understanding of and policies regarding climate change.

First and foremost, AGU believes that scientists actively publishing peer-reviewed literature in the field of climate science should be consulted or involved in any policy regarding climate change. These scientists have the greatest knowledge of the subject matter and can best inform policy concerning their expertise. With its vast network of acclaimed scientists and scientific journals, AGU would be pleased to organize a briefing, suggest scientists for consultation, and/or provide journal articles or fact sheets to assist with such initiatives. Attached with this message, please find AGU's fact sheet on climate change.

AGU also suggests that Congress support federal agency-conducted climatological research, which is critical to maintaining public safety and supporting national security. Academia has neither the infrastructure nor the number of researchers needed to study and answer all of our climate-related questions. Mission agencies like NOAA and USGS collect the highest quality climatological data and conduct essential research to better our understanding of the natural system and humanity's influence. Congressional support of this research is integral to improving American resiliency and preparedness for the impacts of climate change.

Additionally, AGU suggests that more funds be allocated towards climate change adaptation measures as well as reserves for disaster preparedness and relief. With widely-respected studies, such as those from the National Climate Assessment and IPCC, predicting an increase in the number and strength of extreme weather events as a result of climate change, it is essential that we adequately fund agencies working to better equip American infrastructure to withstand such events, as well as to inform the public of the risks associated with the changing climate. It is also vital that emergency management agencies have the necessary resources to support communities in dire need of relief after extreme events, such as the tornadoes that devastated Joplin, Mo., the

severe droughts that crippled much of the country in 2012, and Hurricane Sandy, now believed to be one of the most costly hurricanes in U.S. history.

Lastly, AGU would like to emphasize that climate change is a global issue. While weather-related effects may only be immediately felt by the affected regions, the impacts of these events can have a global reach. For example, prolonged droughts in regions already in short supply of freshwater may lead to conflicts between nations and thereby threaten American security. Collaboration on an international scale to adapt to a changing climate will be fundamental to ensuring the well-being of our nation.

Some of these recommendations may not address the level of policy specificity outlined in your request. As a non-partisan, non-profit 501(c)(3) scientific organization, AGU has taken the position to limit involvement in policy recommendations to include only those with significant scientific support.

With more than 62,000 members worldwide, many of whom specialize in climate science, AGU would like to offer itself and its members as a resource to the Task Force and any congressional offices concerned with climate change and its impacts at local, national, or global scales. AGU is in the process of updating its position statement on climate change and will deliver the updated statement to the Task Force once finalized. The current statement can be found online at www.agu.org/sci_pol/positions. Climate change will also be a primary topic at the upcoming AGU Science Policy Conference in Washington, D.C. More information on the conference is available at <http://spc.agu.org>.

Thank you for considering the American Geophysical Union in your request.

Sincerely,



Christine W. McEntee
Executive Director/CEO
American Geophysical Union